

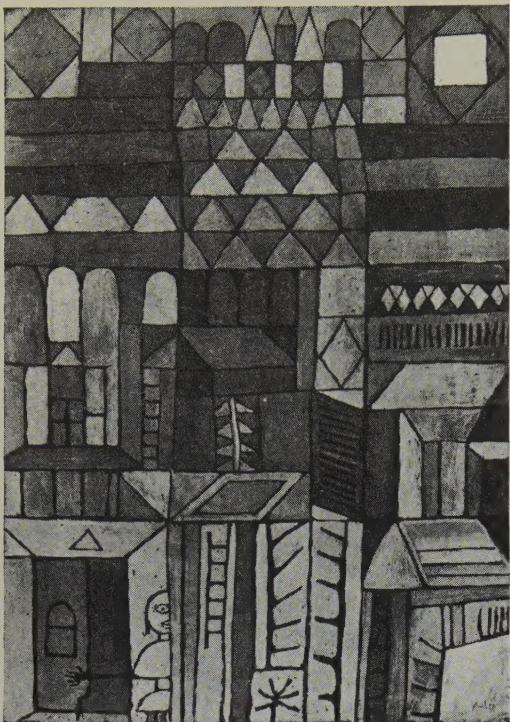
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M

by Benjamin Péret

agic: The Flesh and Blood of Poetry

I

Birds fly, fishes swim, and man invents. He alone possesses imagination and thus is always alert, always stimulated by a necessity constantly being renewed. He knows that his sleep swarms with dreams which advise him to kill his enemy the very next day, or that, interpreted according to the rules, outline his future. But are they his dreams, the manifestations of his "spirit"? Or do they emanate from some ancestor who is favorably disposed towards him or seeks vengeance for some offense? In primitive man's conception, dreams are not really dreams—this mysterious activity of the mind in an inert body reveals to him that his "double" is watching over him, or that an ancestor is influencing his destiny or, later, that a god—Viracocha of the Incas, Huīsilopochtli of the Aztecs—desires the happiness of the people in exchange for an offering of adoration. So primitive man, knowing the narrow limits of his physical possibilities, is not so presumptuous as to believe that the spirit animating him night and day belongs to him alone. The sun, moon, stars indeed, all Nature, are kindred to it, and if, from a material standpoint, he is weak, he is compensated spiritually by a power he believes to be infinite. It is enough for him to find the adequate means of reaching the spirit which he must ultimately master. If Nature seems hostile or at least indifferent to the fate of man, it has not always been so. Animals, plants, meteorological phenomena and the stars are all ancestors ready to rescue or punish him. They have been good and bad and have eventually been transformed from symbols of reward or condemnation into something useful or harmful to man—except when an imaginary accident fixes the meaning of this metamorphosis as an explanation of a natural but surprising phenomenon. Faced by a hailstorm, the Breton peasant says, "The Devil is beating his wife!"—a phrase showing that this conception of the world is not unfamiliar to him and that he can still see Nature with the eyes of a poet. Still—while the barbarous society of our time which forces men to "live" on canned food and—so to speak—cans them in rooms the size of a coffin, putting a premium on sun and sea, tries to reduce their intellectual level to that existing in the immemorial time before the recognition of poetry. I am referring to the wretched existence that present-day/society imposes on workmen, such as pictured by Charlie Chaplin in "Modern Times." For these men, poetry irrevocably loses its meaning. All they have left is language. Their masters have not taken this away because language is still necessary. But they have emasculated it so that it no longer has any poetic expressiveness and has reached the degenerate level of talk between debtor and creditor.

If it is indisputable that the invention of language, automatically produced by the

need of mutual communication between men, first tends to satisfy this need of human relationship, it is no less true that men begin to use entirely poetical forms to express themselves as soon as they have—in a purely unconscious manner—succeeded in organising their language, in adapting it to their most urgent necessities, and have realized the possibilities it conceals. In a word, as soon as the primordial need of communication is satisfied, language becomes poetry.

So-called primitive men—even the most backward tribes—have by now lost sight of the distant epoch when language was invented. Here and there, some legendary fragment poetically recalls this discovery, but very faintly. However, the richness and variety of cosmic interpretations which primitive men have invented prove the vigor and freshness of the imagination of such peoples. These interpretations show that savages do not doubt that "language was given to man to use surrealistically" (André Breton: *Manifesto of Surrealism*) and to complete the satisfaction of their desires. Indeed, the man of prehistoric times could think only in poetic terms and, in spite of his ignorance, penetrated, perhaps intuitively, into himself and into Nature (with which he has such deep kinship) further than the rationalistic thinker who analyses Nature with his bookish knowledge.

There is no need here to make an apology for poetry at the expense of rational thinking. But I do protest against the scorn in which poetry is held by the champions of logic and reason. Both logic and reason were discoveries that had their origin in the subconscious mind. The invention of wine did not lead men to bathe in wine instead of water, and no one will contradict the fact that without rain, wine could never have existed. Likewise, without the illumination of the subconscious, logic and reason, still in limbo, could not be used to disparage poetry still to be created. As long as we do not unreservedly recognize the capital role of the subconscious in our psychic life, its effects on the conscious mind and the reactions of the latter on the former, we shall continue to think like a priest, that is, like a dualistic savage, with, however, this reservation—that the savage remains a poet, while the rationalist, who refuses to understand the *unity* of thought, impedes the cultural movement. On the other hand, if he does understand it, the rationalist becomes a revolutionist who, perhaps without knowing it, tries to come back to poetry. We must, once and for all, break down the artificial opposition created by sectarian minds which have come from either side of the barricade they have erected together—a barricade between poetic thought (qualified as pre-logical) and logical thought, between rational and irrational thought.

A century before Freud, Goethe confirmed the popular belief that poets are the

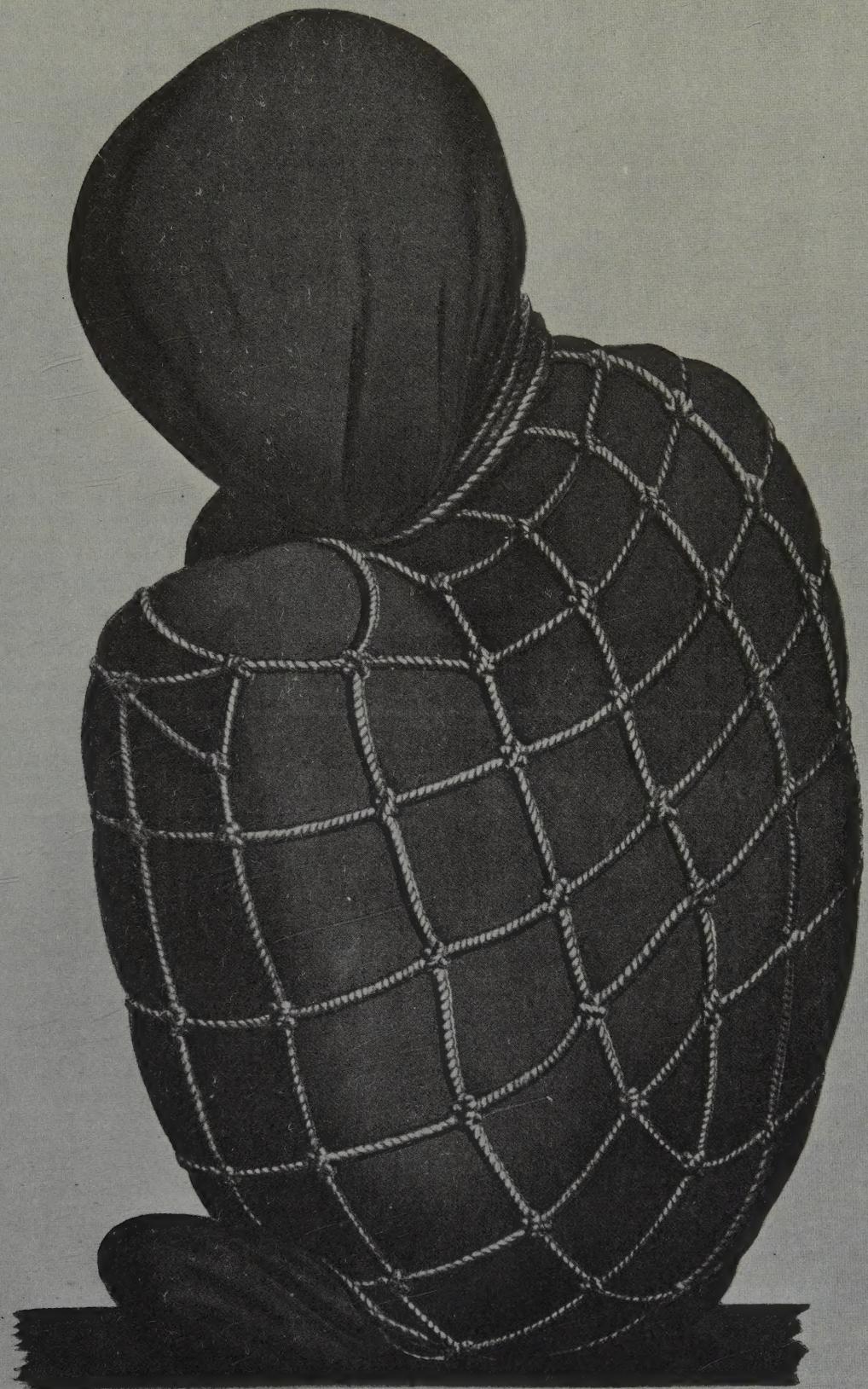
precursors of learned men and said that "man can no longer remain in a conscious state of mind but must plunge again into the subconscious because that is where the root of his being lies."

Prehistoric man's conscious thought, emerging from the fog of the subconscious, scarcely differed from animal instinct. The conscious thought of the primitive man of today is still very weak. It is strictly limited to the practical necessities of everyday life. Subconscious and oneiromantic activity dominates it completely. But from this point of view is civilized man—in spite of what is said or supposed—so far away from his "inferior" brother? Certainly, the explanations which primitive man gives of the world, himself, and Nature are products of pure imagination in which the part of conscious thought is nil or almost so. That is doubtless why his creations, unrestricted, uncriticized, attain the poetic marvellous.

II

No doubt, I should define what I mean by "the poetic marvellous." But I shall do nothing of the sort! It has a luminous quality which cannot stand the competition of the sun; it dispels shadows and the sun dulls its brightness. The dictionary, of course, limits the definition of this word to its dry etymology—and gives no more idea of "marvellous" than an orchid, pressed in a book, gives the impression of its living splendor. I shall try only to suggest what the "poetic marvellous" means.

Sometimes the dolls of the Hopi Indians of New Mexico have heads which represent, schematically, a medieval castle. I shall try to enter this castle. There are no doors; the ramparts have the thickness of a thousand centuries. It is not in ruins, as you might think. Since the time of Romanticism, the ramparts have risen again, reconstituted like rubies—and as hard as that gem. Now that I butt my head against the ramparts I find they have the ruby's limpidity too. They open like high grasses giving way to the passage of a wild beast. Then, by some phenomenon of osmosis, I find myself inside, emitting rays of the Aurora Borealis. Glittering armor, standing guard in the hall like a row of mountain peaks eternally covered with snow, salute me with raised fists whose fingers shed a continual flux of birds—unless they are falling stars, coupled so as to obtain this mixture of primary colors—the delicate nuances of the plumage of humming birds and birds of paradise. Although I seem to be quite alone, I am surrounded by a crowd which blindly obeys me. These are beings less distinct than motes in a sunbeam. In their heads made of roots, their firefly eyes dart in every direction and with their twelve wings armed with claws they move as fast as the lightning which trails in their wake. They stand in my hand, eating the eyes of peacock feathers. If I press them between my thumb and index



From "ANTIGUEDADES PERUANAS"

finger I roll a cigarette, which, between the feet of a knight in armour, quickly takes the form of the first artichoke.

The poetic marvellous is everywhere, hidden from vulgar eyes, but ready to burst like a time-bomb. I open a drawer and see, between spools of thread and a pair of compasses, a spoon for absinthe. Through the holes of this spoon I see a band of tulips, marching in goosestep fashion. Philosophy professors stand in their corollas, discussing the categorical imperative. Each of their words, demonetized coins, break in pieces on the ground, which bristles with noses—and the noses throw the words back in the air where they turn into smoke rings. Their slow dissolution engenders minute fragments of mirrors which reflect a bit of wet moss.

But what was I saying . . . Why open a drawer if a scorpion, falling from the ceiling to my table, says to me: "Don't you know me? I'm the old lamplighter. I left my wooden leg in a vacant lot where an old burnt-down factory is crumbling in ruins, while its high chimney, which still stands, knits brightly colored sweaters. Since then my wooden leg has made its way. Look at the alderman's bay-window, this "Bide-a-Wee" on its head, these . . . But you easily recognize a pope who quickly hides a monocle in his left hand. The monocle can only be a poisoned host. Meanwhile, with his right hand, he traces the sign of the cross in the air—but backwards. At this gesture, the chimney splits open from top to bottom like a mussel, revealing its sixteen floors, where naked ballerinas, somewhat more dense than a whirlwind of pollen, repeat lascivious and complicated steps in the eye of a cat." And the scorpion, having stung itself with its tail, dug down into the thickness of my table, ornamenting it with an inkspot in which I could read with the aid of a mirror: "Hair hangman."

The poetic marvellous is everywhere, in every period of history, in every instant of time. It is, or rather it should be, life itself—it being understood that this life should not deliberately be made sordid, as our present society makes it with its schools, religion, courts, wars, occupations and liberations, concentration camps, and horrible material and intellectual poverty. However, I remember: it was the prison of Rennes where they locked me up in May, 1940. I had committed the crime of thinking that this society was my enemy because for the second time in my life—like so many others—I was obliged to defend it, although I did not recognize anything in common with it.

You know how a prison cell is furnished—there is a bad imitation of a bed which during daytime must be folded up against the wall—so that if you want to rest, you must stretch out on the floor—and a table fixed to the wall opposite the bed, and near it, a stool fixed to the same wall so that the prisoner will not yield to the temptation of flinging it at his jailer.

One morning the window of my cell was painted blue. The window was high up, out of my reach. I spent most of the day stretched out on the floor, my head turned towards the window where the sunlight could no longer penetrate. Sometime after the panes had been painted I saw a picture of Francis the First on one of them—a picture I might have remembered from my elementary history book. On the next pane was a horse that reared. Then there was a tropical landscape such as Rousseau might have painted and in the lower right hand pane appeared a sprite. A charming sprite who tossed butterflies over her head with a light, graceful gesture. In the last pane I read the figure 22 and immediately knew I should be freed on the 22nd. But the 22nd of what month, what year? It was then the first week of June, 1940. The crime I was accused of was then severely punished and

my most optimistic prospect was three years in prison. Nevertheless, I was forthwith convinced, despite the probability to the contrary, that my liberation was near.

However, every day—or almost every day—the pictures changed. I never saw more than four at once on the eight panes. Francis the First turned into a boat sinking beneath the waves; the landscape, a complicated machine; the horse, a room in a café, etc. But the figure 22 remained obstinately visible until a bomb fell one day from a plane, shattering the morale of the jailers—who disappeared for the whole day—and most of the panes. The only one that was left—and that only, in part—was the pane on which I continued to see the figure 22. Once or twice it disappeared to show up elsewhere.

Believe it or not, I got out of the Rennes prison on July 22nd—by paying a ransom of a thousand francs to the Nazis.

Free—and enchanted with my "discovery," I painted panes in blue, green, red, etc.,—but all I saw, alas, was solid color.

The error was flagrant; marvels cannot be made according to a druggist's formula. They always take you by surprise. A certain state of "vacancy" is necessary too, before they can happen. Of course, I hear you saying: "See—that's just what I thought. It was only an illusion on your part." But the fellow who splashed the panes with big brush strokes never could have painted the pictures I saw later. Yet they were so real I could not doubt for a moment but that I had seen them. And how is it that when I colored the panes, no pictures appeared?

In prison, I was in that state of vacancy I have just referred to, I was "one of those whose desires have the form of clouds" (Charles Baudelaire).

All the pictures I saw on the first day (they are the only ones I shall take into account as I do not remember the others so clearly; I got into the habit of looking for them each day, whereas the first ones took me by surprise), were based on my sharp appetite for liberty. That was quite natural for a person in my situation. The picture of Francis the First immediately suggested the school where I had first learned about this king; the history books presented him as a kindly liberal sovereign, the protector of artists and poets of the Renaissance. The idea of that school came to mind because it too had been a prison—one from which I was released each evening and which, in retrospect, was so much more preferable than that of Rennes! The teacher too was a sort of jailer—but how much more goodnatured than the men I had to deal with day and night!

The rearing horse symbolised my ineffectual protest against my unfortunate predicament. It was also reminiscent of the fact that in the previous war I had met the enemy while serving in the first regiment of cuirassiers. What penal servitude that regiment was, too! The officers had only the most vulgar insults and threats of punishment for their men. Still, the soldiers had a few hours of liberty each day which made their lot—execrable as it was—preferable to that of a prisoner.

Now as to the Rousseau-like tropical forest, the sprite, and the butterflies—Rousseau had belonged to the French expeditionary force sent to Mexico by Napoleon III. The memory of his stay there had inspired his tropical backgrounds. Before the present war, which I knew was coming, and which I knew would be dangerous for me because of the military dictatorship in France that it would bring about, I tried in vain to go to Mexico. For a long time I had wanted to know this country—which now has given me a refuge. The sprite immediately brought to mind the thought of my companion. I had not had any news about her and her fate worried me much more than my own.

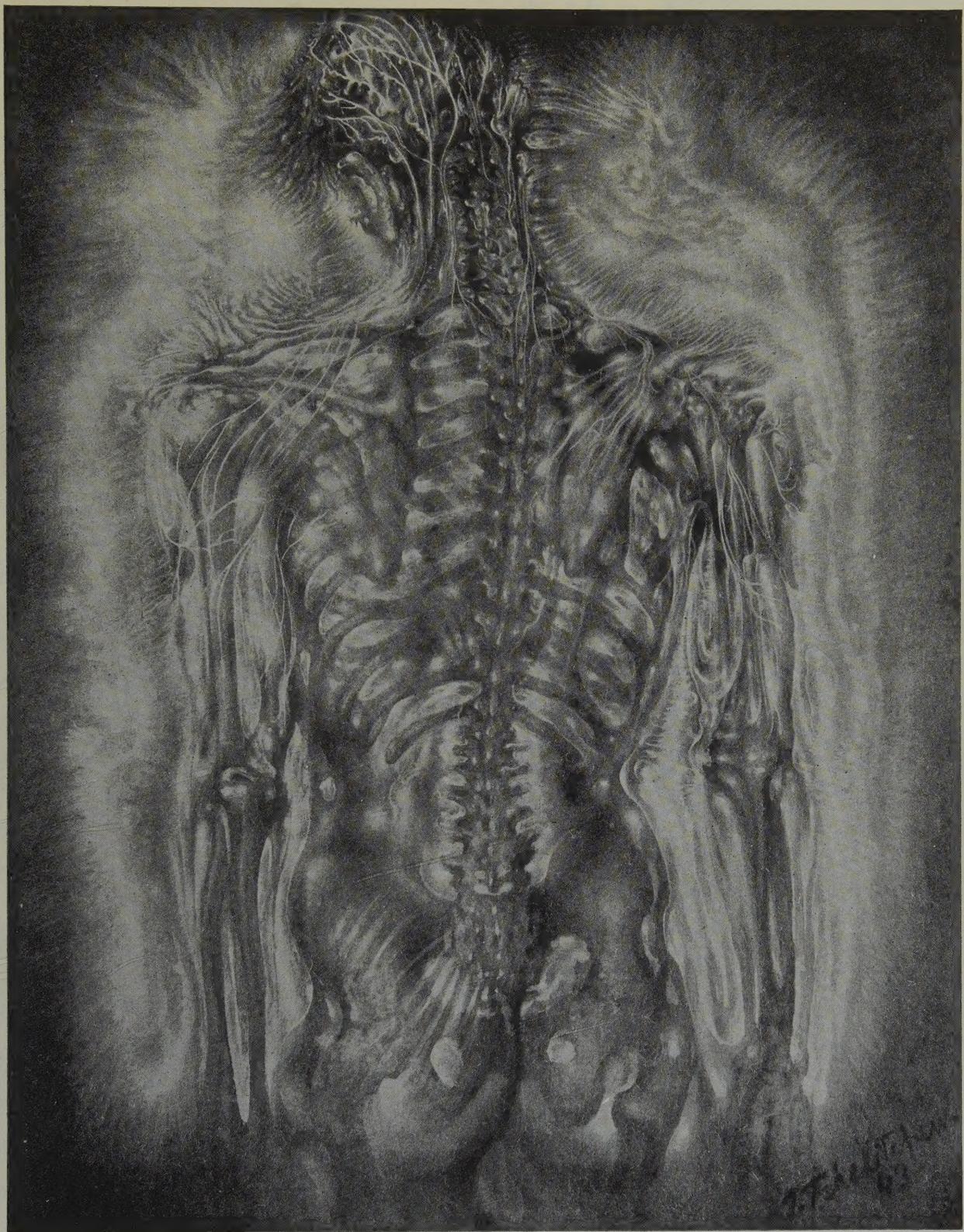
I knew she was menaced both by internment in a French camp and expulsion—which would have meant a concentration camp. I could not forget the expression of terrified distress which I had seen on her face when I had left her, eight or ten days before in Paris. She was standing on the platform of the Gare Montparnasse when I, handcuffed and surrounded by an imposing escort of policemen, had boarded the train for Rennes. All these sad thoughts—which I might liken to black butterflies—were being cast away by the sprite. True, the butterflies on the pane were light colored—but my companion had always suffered from a nervous fear of insects, even of butterflies. I had often joked with her about this, saying: "In tropical countries there are often actual clouds of butterflies. What would become of you if we were ever to go to Mexico?" My companion's presence in the exotic landscape proved how much I wanted her to be free, out of reach of the dastardly police. Certainly, it would be better for her to ward off light-colored butterflies than the "black butterflies" which must be attacking her day and night. Finally, if we had succeeded in leaving for Mexico, we would be free, and what would even a cloud of butterflies matter!

III

The poet's status is such that he who lays claim to it is automatically placed on the fringe of society, and this is the case the more truly he is a poet. The recognition of "accursed" poets clearly shows this. They are "accursed" for being outside the pale of society—just as their predecessors, the sorcerers, were outlawed by society and its church for the same reasons. The sorcerers undermined the religion-dominated medieval society by their intuitions, and today poets combat by their visions the intellectual and moral postulates which present-day society would surreptitiously like to give a religious character. Orderly people consider poets to be madmen because of their visionary nature. In primitive societies, madmen were thought to be ambassadors from heaven or messengers from the infernal powers. But their supernatural power was never doubted. Thus, we can say that the sorcerer, the poet and the madman come under a common denominator. But the madman, having broken off with the exterior world, drifts on the wild ocean of his imagination and we cannot see what he is looking at. The common denominator of the sorcerer, the poet and the madman cannot be anything else but magic . . . the flesh and blood of poetry. Moreover, at the time that magic summed up all of human science, poetry was not distinguished from it; thus we can say, without any risk of error, that primitive myths are largely made up of the residue of poetic illuminations, intuitions or omens confirmed in such a brilliant manner that they instantaneously penetrated to the depths of these peoples' consciousness.

The origin of poetry is lost in the unfathomable depths of ages because man was born a poet—a fact that children prove every day. But poetry was the great revolution—the first historic, or rather, prehistoric revolution—in which the taboo of incest played the leading role. It was this taboo which gave the revolution its initial impetus by directing a part of the libido towards an outlet from which it emerged, sublimated, in the form of the myth, projecting the picture of the assassinated father on the infinity of the heavens. "The corpse of a dead enemy always smells good." Though disgraced in his lifetime, the father is honored by his murderers with a legendary halo which succeeding generations will each enhance with new light. Such are the first myths, the first poems of those distant times when all men were more or less sorcerers—that is, poets

(Continued on Page 63)



GOLDEN LEAF (1943)

[Private Collection]

Pavel Tchelitchew

PAINTING
(Oil)
1941



Leonor Fini

shepherdess of the sphinxes

by Leon Kochnitzky



Leonor Fini:
SELF
PORTRAIT

a RETIRED judge with nothing better to do might prepare a lexicon of famous women painters.

True, it would have no more significance than the *Diatriba de Georgiis* which the Jesuit, Leo Allatius, dedicated to all Byzantine writers whose first name was George.

Every period, every school and art movement, has had its own woman painter. Certain constants recur which determine, not the manner or process of her creativeness, but its intensity.

For example, a woman painter never goes against the fashion of her time.

And a woman who paints is usually well off.

Because it is harder for her to escape from the limitations of her feelings, personality and surroundings, the work of a woman painter more accurately reflects the inner world of a school or the mental background of a period than the work of great men, who are less circumscribed by time and space.

Nevertheless, a woman painter sometimes succeeds in rendering the characteristics of a master, a school, or society. Her paintings accomplish this with a muted accent, a languid rhythm—*affievolito*, as the Italians would say. And what she lacks in penetration, she makes up for in charm.

Improvisation, luck, and instinct play important roles in a woman's art.

"*De longs espoirs et de vastes pensées*" belong to man. But to be able to capture these hopes and thoughts in a divine moment of intuition is one of woman's secrets.

The most perfect work a woman accomplishes—and the longest—takes nine months. She may have more difficult tasks, but none that takes more time. Her highly creative artistic labors rarely last more than nine days.

A woman is fatigued by any prolonged intellectual tension. She knows how to make a masterpiece in the flash of a magical second. Faëry fingers must fly at work or they lose their skill.

Women make the best omelets. But fine pastries—which demand patience and planning—are always made by men.

Rosalba Carriera, Angelica Kauffmann, Vigée-Lebrun, Rosa Bonheur, Maria Baschkirtsewa, Mary Cassatt, Madeleine Lemaire, Juliette Wytsman, Suzanne Valadon, Marie Laurencin, Valentine Prax, Halicka—all of them are women painters in every sense of the term.

In all fairness, however, it must be admitted that occasionally a man, otherwise virile, paints like a woman.

The converse is extremely rare. Berthe Morizot, who can be said to have painted like a man, was the only woman of her kind in the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth, we have Leonor Fini.

Born on the banks of La Plata, as was Lautréamont, Leonor Fini is nonetheless Italian—and Parisian. Her work, of an unmistakable individuality, has already a place of its own on the frontiers of Surrealism and neo-Romanticism.

From the outset, this painter from Buenos Aires revealed a highly developed sense of fantasy, a gift for ornament, a talent for sheer surprise and a prodigious capacity for metamorphosis which transfigured her vision; it is this capacity which is particularly masculine in her.

Leonor has created a new alloy in art. With all her qualities and faults, her work is smooth as bronze, glistening as vermeil, fine as salt. There is nothing of the mosaic about it, nothing patched. It is all of a piece. The extraordinary unity of conception which characterizes each canvas also characterizes her work as a whole.

However, it is not the limited unity of Marie Laurencin who has only one manner and one picture—pleasant enough—which she has painted over and over again for the last thirty years.

Like Modigliani, Leonor has a style. And this style imposes its own strict laws on her fantasy, but that does not mean that she has not been subject to influences.

In her first canvases, we have the impression of a girl intoxicated by her knowledge of famous

She found it amusing to transplant well known paintings in her private world—sometimes taking "The Bad Boy" (changed into a girl in her free and easy way) from the fresco of the Schifanoia Palace at Ferrara, or Aubrey Beardsley's charming "Child with Rattles," or yet again, some pre-Raphaelite or Boecklinian "Mirror of Venus."

But the truth of the matter was that Leonor was not submitting to influences but playing with them. She indulged in a sort of masquerade which only the happy few could recognize. Conscious of her extraordinary gifts, she gave her fancy free rein in a wilful spirit of mystification.

Very soon, however, she became interested in more serious tasks. Her imagination revealed to her a strange land, peopled with magnificent creatures—men and women (especially women) in

THE FIVE MASTER TERMS

Their Place in a "Dramatistic" Grammar of Motives

By KENNETH BURKE

At the moment, the slogan for the discussion of motives is "geopolitics." Surrealists would probably prefer to locate the center of motivation in the overlap of waking and sleep. The Supreme Court follows the vocabulary of the United States Constitution for its version of the national motives. Every mythology, theology, metaphysics, treatise on sociology, anthropology, medicine, physics, every political exhortation, etc., makes its own peculiar choices in the assigning of motives. Everywhere you look, people are busy assigning motives for their own and other people's conduct. In philosophic speech, motives are assigned systematically; in everyday speech, they are assigned at random. The many works now being published on our war aims are all proposals setting forth the motives that, in the views of their authors, should prevail after the war. The Atlantic Charter is a vague declaration of motives.

Obviously, a work ten times as long as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* would not be long enough to write the history of all the *available* material on the imputing of motives. And for every statement about motives that has survived as an available document, millions of statements about motives went up the chimney, or down the dumb-waiter shaft, or disappeared into thin air over the backyard fence. An almost infinite amount of material is irrevocably lost to anyone who would write a Comprehensive and Exhaustive History of the Imputing of Motives.

I would stress this point to absurdity. For I would make it readily apparent that one could not possibly hope to get a synoptic approach to the subject of motives by a purely *historical* survey. As an alternative method, we propose to work with Five Master Terms. We want to use these terms as a *generating principle*, a general method that would enable you in a sense to "anticipate" any specific notions about motive.

I

The quickest way to indicate what I mean by a generating principle is to consider a case where it is absent. I think of I. A. Richards' recent book, *How to Read a Page*. Here Mr. Richards makes a list of a hundred or so words he considers crucial to our thinking. They are such words as: Amount, Cause, Development, Do, End, Event, Form, Free, Law, Level, Material, Motion, Place, Power, Property, Purpose, Quality, Reason, Rela-

tion, Representative, Right, Substance, Way, Work. I cite some I should think particularly important for a Grammar of Motives. But I make the selection without strong preferences, since any systematically developed discussion of motives would probably employ equivalents for practically all the words in the list. Mr. Richards himself focuses his attention upon sixteen of them: Make, Get, Give, Love, Have; Seem, Be, Do, See; Mind, Thought, Idea, Knowledge; Reason, Purpose, Work. Taking them up in succession, he writes very intelligent glosses on them.

As you proceed from one gloss to the next, you begin to catch glimpses of the ways in which the words are implicated in one another. You see how the meanings weave back and forth. Or rather, you get the general idea; the mutual involvements are much too intricate for a purely systematic treatment. But pick any one of the words—and by pondering over it you begin to see that the others live in it and it lives in them.

I might cite this as one of the happier passages among Mr. Richards' glosses, though perhaps a bit over-idealistic in its stress:

At one point—where one sense of Give joins up with a sense of Get—an archproblem arises and, for some minds, a blaze of light upon it. This may be instanced from Coleridge's *Dejection*.

"*O Lady, we receive but what we give.*"

Getting and Giving here are one: our world is what we have put into it. The so-called 'data' are of our making. (Compare See, below.)

And were we, following his instructions, to compare See, we should find there considerations leading into the field of Seem and Be. And since what we are is involved in what we do, we could

next move to another of the words, Work—and so on.

Contemplating the list, I think of Shelley's allegorical lyric, *The Sensitive Plant*. Recall the flowers in this miraculous garden, and how the poet says of them

... each one was interpenetrated
With the light and odour its
neighbours shed,
Like young lovers whom youth
and love make dear
Wrapped and filled by their
mutual atmosphere.

But the poem also tells us that there was a "Power in this sweet place, an Eve in this Eden." There was a Lady, a figure in whom the whole substance of the garden was summed up. From her all the motives so radiated that, with her death, the garden was drastically transformed. But there is no such concentrating Eve in Mr. Richards' garden of miraculous terms. As you read of their interlocking, you feel on the *verge* of discovering some core, or unitary essence, for the lot. You feel that you may be about to move from the successive peripheral glosses to a center. But this movement is left uncompleted.

That is what I mean by saying that Mr. Richards' treatment lacks a "generating principle." He gives you a wheel without a hub. Furthermore, by the use of a generating principle, one could reverse the direction. And whereas Mr. Richards proceeds somewhat from the periphery in the direction of a center, one could proceed from center to periphery. There is room for both movements; the use of a generating principle would favor the latter.

II

The five master terms that go to make up the generating principle are: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose. And the matter I would here demonstrate is this: If you pause to contemplate this pentad, and to ask yourself how its members are related to one another, you will readily see how the various philosophic systems take form from the logic of these interrelationships. This is what I mean by saying that the generating principle would "anticipate" the various philosophies.

Any rounded statement of motives will contain elements that fall under all five of these heads. It will say what is being done (the Act); under what circumstances or in what situation (Scene) the act takes place; what sort of person (Agent) does it; by what means (Agency) he does it, and for what end or Purpose. If you consider these five terms hastily, they are perfectly clear. Indeed, the more hastily you glance at them, the more clearly you can distinguish them from one another. Thus: the hero (Agent), to escape (Purpose), severs (Act)

the bars of his prison (Scene) with a file (Agency).

But the more steadily you contemplate these terms, the greater their tendency to merge into one another. Indeed, they are like the fingers on a hand. In their extremities, the fingers are distinct, but in the palm they merge. And if you would go from one finger to another without a leap, you need but trace the tendon down into the palm of the hand, and then go back along another tendon. As we shall later show, it is by reason of these overlapping areas that many important transformations in thought take place.

A machine is obviously an instrument or means (that is, an Agency). But if you pile up machinery to the point where you get industrialism, in this vast accumulation of Agencies you have a new situation or environment (that is, a new Scene) to serve as a crucial factor motivating human conduct. One's arm may be considered an Agency; yet as part of the person it may be considered as a property of the term, Agent. I said that the hero, to escape, severs the bars. I called "escape" the purpose and "sever" the Act. But we might say that "escape" is the real word for the Act here; and then we might offer some motive like "love of freedom" as specification for the term, Purpose. Or war may be treated as an Agency, insofar as it is a means to an end; it may be treated as a collective Act subdivisible into many individual acts; it may figure as a Purpose in schemes proclaiming a cult of war; for the man inducted into the army, war is a Scene, a situation that motivates the nature of his training; and in mythologies war can be an Agent, or perhaps better a super-Agent, in the figure of the war god.

In brief, there is an area in which any of the five master terms overlaps upon one or another of its fellows. And it is by using this margin of overlap that one can reduce one term to another. Indeed, by manipulating these areas of ambiguity, we may even reduce all the terms to one of them. Instrumentalist philosophies, for instance, can convert practically everything into terms of Agency. Following this line of thought in a house-that-Jack-built fashion, we can say: the file was the Agency that sawed the bars; the hand was the Agency that moved the file, the nerves and muscles were the Agency that moved the hand, the brain was the Agency that guided the nerves and muscles, the educational system was the Agency that trained the brain, the social values were an Agency that shaped the educational system, and so on, with all working together as Agencies that make for "adjustment" or "adaptation," which we might, from the technical point of view, call suc-

philosophy's equivalent for God."

In Schopenhauer's title, *The World as Will and Idea*, we have a reduction of all the terms to the term, Agent, since volition and deation are the properties of persons. Naturalistic philosophies which treat experience in terms of human beings confronting impersonal nature, give us a dialectic of agent and scene interacting. Behaviorism, which treats all conduct as mechanical response to mechanical stimulus, reduces our five terms to the one term, Scene, with everything being considered in terms of sheer motion.

We have said, however, that all five terms are needed for a full statement of motives. Accordingly, whenever a doctrine formally eliminates any one of the terms, the term nonetheless lingers in the offing, lying vaguely about the edges of the doctrine. Thus it is always ready to be reclaimed by some advocate of a competing doctrine, who will proceed to show how this term was slighted; and he may next proceed, in over-compensation, not merely to restore the term to its proper weighting, but to more than feature it, creating the whole world in its image.

III

I have given passing hints as to how the featuring of the terms is reflected in different philosophic schools. Let us now consider these correspondences systematically.

In Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, materialism is defined as "that metaphysical theory which regards all the facts of the universe as sufficiently explained by the assumption of body or matter, conceived as extended, impenetrable, eternally existent, and susceptible of movement or change of relative position." The article also cites Hobbes: "The reduction of psychical processes to physical is the special thesis of materialism."

Are not these citations enough to make it quickly clear that one gets a materialistic philosophy by featuring our term, Scene? Common modern variants of the materialistic, or Scenic, emphasis define in terms of "environment" as the primary motivating factor. Political philosophies are Scenic, or materialistic, insofar as they account for policies on the basis of the objective situation."

Idealism, in the Baldwin dictionary, is described thus: "in metaphysics, any theory which maintains the universe to be throughout the work of reason and mind." And elsewhere: "Any theory which seeks the explanation, or ultimate *raison d'être*, of the cosmic evolution in the realization of reason, self-consciousness, or spirit, may fairly claim to be included under this designation. For the end in such a system is not only the result, but . . . is also the true world-building power."

Thus, unadulteratedly idealistic philosophies start and end in the featuring of properties belonging to the term, Agent. It is so with philosophies that are grounded in the "ego," or "super-ego," or the "generalized I," or the "subjective," etc. By reason of its stress

upon the term, Agent, philosophical idealism leads readily into psychology. And its close connection with epistemology, or the problem of knowledge, is due to this same bias; for to approach the universe by asking ourselves how knowledge is possible is to ground our speculations psychologistically, in the position of the knower.

Sociologically, we may note an ironic connection between idealism and the written contract, thus: Before the spread of literacy, a man could break his promise simply by forgetting exactly what he had promised. After the spread of literacy, when promises are put unchangeably into writing, the man who would break his promise must hire lawyers to prove that his words no longer mean what they were obviously meant to mean. In time, our very notion of reality gets its shape from these ingenious misinterpretations, judicially sanctioned as the law of the land. Hence our great body of Constitutional law in particular and idealistic philosophy in general.

Under Pragmatism, in the Baldwin dictionary, we read: "This term is applied by Kant to the species of hypothetical imperative . . . which prescribe the means necessary to the attainment of happiness." We suggest that the distinctive factor here is Kant's reference to *means*. For we should hold that pragmatic philosophies are generated by the featuring of our term, Agency. The pragmatic notion that a policy is to be tested by its consequences can sometimes obscure this fact that the genius of pragmatism resides in its stress upon Agency. But we can discern this genius readily enough in the very title ("instrumentalism") which John Dewey chooses to characterize his variant of the pragmatist doctrine. The Deweyite philosophy is designed to feature scientific method as the primary instrument of social adjustment.

Mysticism, we would identify with our term, Purpose. Mysticism embraces, we are told, "those forms of speculative and religious thought which profess to attain an immediate apprehension of the divine essence or the ultimate ground of existence." And: "Penetrated by the thought of the ultimate unity of all experience, and impatient of even a seeming separation from the creative source of things, mysticism succumbs to a species of metaphysical fascination. Its ideal becomes that of passive contemplation, in which the distinctions of individuality disappear, and the finite spirit achieves, as it were, utter union or identity with the Being of beings."

It is usually the element of unity per se that people treat as the essence of mysticism. I should contend, however, that it is not merely unity that is the mark of mysticism, but unity of the individual with some cosmic or universal purpose. This notion certainly pervades the above citations, as in the references to "the divine essence," "the creative source," and "the Being of beings."

The leading role played by the term, Purpose, in mystical philosophies can be most readily discerned when we observe that scientific

philosophies which propose to eliminate "vitalism," "voluntarism," "spiritualism," "animism," "occult powers," and the like from their accounts of motivation regularly herald their attainments as the elimination of "teleology" (a metaphysician's word for Purpose). Or we may discern the purposive element clearly enough in Bergson's mystical philosophy of "creative evolution" and the *élan vital*. Here the world is divided into two kinds of purpose: living purpose, still in process of formation ("spirit"); and dead or congealed purpose, purpose that, in having attained its expression, remains fossilized as "matter."

Or we may note that mystical philosophies arise as a general social manifestation in times of great scepticism or confusion about the nature of human purpose. They are a mark of transition, flourishing when one set of public presuppositions about the *ends of life* ("ends" is a synonym of Purpose) has become weakened or disorganized, and no new public structure, of sufficient depth and scope to be satisfying, has yet taken its place. Thus, precisely at such times of general hesitancy, the mystic can compensate for his own particular doubts about human purpose by submerging himself in some vision of a *universal*, or *absolute* purpose, with which he can identify himself.

Paradoxically, a purpose as thus conceived is so "pure" as to be quite unlike the kinds of purpose we encounter in ordinary human experience. Indeed, such is the "paradox of the absolute," a "divine" or "cosmic" purpose would be much the same as no purpose at all, so far as everyday standards are concerned. Just as the mystic oxymoron conceives of a black radiance, a bitter sweetness, a learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*), etc., so the mystic's "free" union with All-Purpose becomes much the same as a *compulsion*. Such considerations explain why the psychology of mysticism is close to the psychology of neurosis. For the neurotic's God can be a disguised replica of his compulsion; and in communing with his God, he may by an unconscious subterfuge be but abandoning himself to his own weakness.

On the purely philosophic level, we can see how mystical doctrines of Absolute Purpose can lead, paradoxically, into theories of *mechanism*. Indeed, though we today usually think of mechanistic philosophies as contrasting with theistic philosophies, at an earlier time the notion of a mechanistic universe was put forward as evidence of God's aims; for the existence of nature as a perfect clockwork was taken to indicate the design (another word for Purpose) of God as the perfect clockmaker. But later, by an irony of history, it became clear that the identification of naturalistic mechanism with divine purpose could be interpreted differently. Namely, if the clockwork is perfect, we should be able to account for matters of motivation by analyzing the structure of the clockwork alone; and God could be omitted as an unnecessary term in the explanation.

Philosophies that have their

Ausgangspunkt in some variant of the term, Act, are the philosophies of realism. I mean, of course, philosophies in which the term is given its full meaning. We can refer to "the action of a motor," or to the motor's parts in "interaction," but that is a merely figurative usage, since motors cannot act in the full sense of the word. Their parts move and are moved. Literally, persons are capable of both action and motion; machines are capable only of motion.

The philosophy of Aristotle, and its application in Aquinas, would be an obvious instance. The scholastics, following Aristotle, defined God as "pure act" (*Actus purus*) —and of course, in such a philosophy the term that is equated with God would be the originating term, or ground term. This is no place to attempt a summary of realistic doctrine. But let me cite a few passages from the Baldwin dictionary that will serve to indicate why I feel justified in equating realism and Act.

In Aristotle "things are more or less real according as they are more or less *ἐνεργείᾳ* (*actu*, from which our 'actuality' is derived)." In scholastic realism "form is the *actus*, the attainment, which realizes the matter." "As Saint Thomas says, and as the whole Peripatetic doctrine teaches, *forma per se ipsam facit rem esse in actu* (or, as it is often expressed, *a form is an act*)." Or when discussing the characteristic distinction between existence and essence, the article on Aquinas defines existence as "the act of essence." We might phrase this another way by saying that "existence" is *action* and "essence" is *potential* action. Or we could sum it up in a ratio: essence (*essentia*) is to existence (*esse*) as capacity (*potentia*) is to fulfilment (*actus*). Hence, in the realistic stress, things that exist are called *act-ualities*. Or as Etienne Gilson expresses it in his *God and Philosophy*, existence is "an act, not a thing."

With a little goodwill, two other major philosophic strategies can be derived from our pentad. First, we could "anticipate" rationalism by noting that it is the name for the featuring of the philosophic medium *per se*. Even the most mystical philosophy of the irrational is incipiently rationalistic, in that it sets forth its position in the form of a rationale. Three meanings for rationalism are given in the Baldwin dictionary: it is the theory (1) "that everything in religion is to be rationally explained or else rejected"; (2) "that reason is an independent source of knowledge," and has a "higher authority" than sense-perception; (3) that "certain elementary concepts are to be sought, and 'all the remaining content of philosophy is to be derived, in a deductive way, from these fundamental notions.'" All three of these, you will note, contain the same *methodological* stress. And so the three great exponents of rationalism, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz, offered respectively a *Discourse on Method*, an *Ethics* presented *more geometrico* after the analogy of the Euclidean method of demonstration, and "the idea of a uni-

versal logic and language" which should be to philosophy what the calculus was to physics. Whereas these earlier rationalists said that the world is rational, Hegel went as much farther in that direction as is possible by saying that the world is Reason.

And finally, we may place nominalism, the doctrine that flourished in dialectical opposition to scholastic realism, and that eventually served as a transition from scholasticism to modernism. The realistic doctrine best commended itself "as long as the chief interest was the universe as a whole, and the Church and state as wholes." But nominalism gained favor along with "the growth of consciousness of particular individuality (*haecceitas, this special uniquely distinguished individual*)." Scholastic realism, as the philosophy best attuned to communal action of the sort that prevailed under feudalism, had stressed the universal, generic, or tribal in its theory of meaning. As a time-saver that flattens out some subtle distinctions, I have suggested elsewhere that realism treats individuals as members of a group, whereas nominalism treats a group as an aggregate of individuals. Or we could say that, in realism, the genus generates the members of the genus, as were we to say that the tribe gives birth to the members of tribe. But Occam's nominalism, for instance, is distinguished by "the positive assertion that specific individualities, differentiated in themselves, are the real." Thus from the nominalist point of view, "universals," or words for *classes* of things, are derived purely as generalizations about particulars. Historically, then, nominalism was the individualistic, or atomistic counterpart of realism. But applying the same pattern to the other philosophies, we might also look for six brands of nominalism, to go with each of our six philosophies as their atomistic counterparts.

Thus, all told, out of our five terms we have spawned seven major philosophic strategies or emphases: materialism (Scene); idealism (Agent); pragmatism (Agency); mysticism (Purpose); realism (Act); rationalism (stressing the philosophic medium itself, hence inclined to transform the substance of philosophy into the substance of the world); nominalism (the atomistic movement that can take form in dialectical opposition to any one of the six emphases).

IV

This scheme has many imperfections, beyond the fact that there are still other brands of philosophy to be accounted for. In the matter of mysticism, for instance, since the mystic *Individual* identifies himself with the universal *Whole* or *All*, it would be hard to distinguish between a collectivist mysticism and an individualistic ("nominalist") variety. But some mystics were the founders of religious orders, thereby endowing their teachings with an aspect of *social* collectivism. And surely there is a distinction between such a mysticism and the mysticism of one whose direct self-identification with the universe elides the stage of so-

cial organization.

We might also note, among the many points of overlap among the terms, that Purpose quite readily dissolves into Agent, inasmuch as Purpose is a property of Agents. For instance, Schopenhauer's conception of the universal motive (as a dark Will driving towards clear objectification) is an idealism close to the edge of mysticism. And the Spinozistic conception of a natural urge toward self-preservation (the *conatus sese conservandi*) has a strongly mystical ingredient in its way of merging individual purpose with universal necessity.

Or, with an idealistic rationalism of the Hegelian sort, which proclaims Reason as the very ground and substance of the universe, there are strongly personalistic traits in this concept of Reason that would differentiate such an "objective" philosophy from a purely "materialistic" one. That is, though Hegel proclaims dialectical Reason as the all-embracing ground or Scene, the developmental traits in his concept of Reason are highly personalistic; hence, the philosophy really departs from a grounding in the term, Agent, or rather from a rationalistic merger of properties belonging to both Scene and Agent. An outgrowth of Hegelianism, the Marxist dialectical materialism (which claims to have found Hegel's rationalism standing on its head and to have turned it over) is likewise the stressing of a Scene-Agent pair, a dialectic of interchange between human Agents and natural Scene. The original Hegelian Scene-Agent merger is here naturalistically dissociated into a dualism, distinguishing between a personal principle and an impersonal one. Yet political philosophies are so strongly "activist," that the very country which adopteded dialectical materialism as its official philosophy has evolved in literary criticism a theory of "socialist realism."

As we have said, since all five terms are required in a rounded statement of motives, whatever term or terms a given philosophy may favor, the other terms are always in the offing, pressing to be utilized by some competing philosopher who would wrench the pentad into a different position. And all highly developed philosophies must be treated as permutations and combination of these various resources, so that each, in its plenitude, will lie somewhat on the bias across the logic of the five terms as presented in their initial simplicity. A materialism affirmed in opposition to collective idealism, for instance, will take a different shape than if it had grown out of an opposition to an individualistic ("nominalist") pragmatism. The shades of intermixture should provide one with more philosophic possibilities than are contained in the chemist's table of elements.

As we have used the metaphor of the fingers and hand with relation to our five terms, so with reference to their philosophic analogue we might use a sun metaphor. A given philosophy is like a sunspot, a configuration made of molten metals that have been cast forth from the boiling interior of

the sun, projected far enough from the source to congeal into a fixed form. But whatever form it takes, it may fall again into the All-Mother, there to be again molten and transformed, so that the next eruption will be of a different structure. Or, the ancients had a concept of a *panspermia*, an original chaos in which all the seeds of all the universal possibilities lay in one vast confusion. Such a *panspermia* is the region of overlap among the five terms, the primary confusion of the many powers that take expression in the different philosophies.

Much more could be said about the pentad. In particular, one might note that there are two major pairings. There is the dialectic of Agent and Scene (idealism and materialism, subject and object, people and things) which has dominated so much of modern thought. And there is the equally prevalent dialectic of means and ends (Agency and Purpose, pragmatism and mysticism). In such dialectic pairings, there are particularly good opportunities for the opposed members to change places. Thus, it is the pressure of the Scene-Agent relationship that gives us, in poetry, the "pathetic fallacy" whereby the imagery of *nature* can be used to convey states of mind in *people*. And it is the pressure of the means-ends (Agency-Purpose) pair that can lead one to ask whether the Hitlerite cult of the state as an end and use of this cult as a means is to be considered a degenerate brand of pragmatism or a degenerate brand of mysticism. The close connection between ends and means favors this ambiguity.

The term, Act, likewise has its partner. *Action* is paired with *rest*. Or otherwise put: the partner of *dramatic action* is the *lyric pause*, the condition of arrest at some one fixed mood, the maintaining of some attitude or mental state, some persistent contemplation that fills the entire universe of discourse in the given poem. There is dramatic action, and there is the lyric rest that is the end of action.

Our word "mask" is a test case for realism, as regards this pairing of act and rest. If we use the word as a synonym for disguise, deception, etc., we are using it idealistically, epistemologically, from the standpoint of the "problem of knowledge." But there is an earlier realistic, or "dramatistic" usage. Thus, in Greek tragedies, the actors wore masks; and each mask represented the *fixed principle* underlying the role of each different character, it was the permanence that went with the change. In Shelley's *Defense of Poetry* you will find the word used twice, once idealistically, once realistically.

The pentad is certainly no invention of ours. "Dramatism" is certainly no invention of ours. We lay claim only to having looked at the matter a bit more quizzically than usual, until the meditation yielded some results. Instead of saying, "Life is a drama and the world is its theatre," then hurrying on, we tried to ponder this metaphor long and hard. As for the five terms themselves, you have a quite similar list in the "five journalistic W's" (which are, I be-

lieve, *who, what, when, where, why*). Or there was an old hexameter, used by the early schoolmen in advising students how to divide up a subject into topics:

quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quo modo, quando

Here you have seven, respectively: who, what, where, by what means, why, how, when. Our term, Agency, merges "how" and "by what means." And our term, Scene, merges "where" and "when" (for in the modern historicist mode of thought, a temporal specification is as much a way of locating something environmentally as is a spatial specification: our notion of a Scene is such-and-such place at such-and-such time).

The middle ages, constructing their philosophy about the drama of salvation, thereby automatically possessed so "dramatistic" a philosophy that this aspect of the seven topics did not press for formal recognition. In the modern world, however, we have made characteristic brands of philosophy explicitly designed to assist in the dissolution of drama. I think of such doctrines as behaviorism, positivism, logical empiricism, operationalism, that is, the philosophies of map-making, of laboratory testing, of recording, pointing, checking, verifying, etc. which have impersonal methods as the ideal, whereas drama is intensely personalistic. Whatever one may think of such philosophies, I contend that one cannot place them properly (or spawn them from a generating principle) except by considering them "dramatistically," in terms of their movement towards the dissolution of drama.

There are four major ways in which drama is dissolved:

(1) By the turn from dramatic *act* to *lyric state*. This is not to be treated as a dissolution in the full sense, since *status* is an integral partner of *actus*.

(2) By philosophies of motion. That is, whereas dramatist philosophies treat motion as a mere condition of action, something that the Agent must embody in the course of acting, philosophies of motion *reduce action to motion*. The behaviorist treatment of human conduct in terms of stimulus and response is the chemically pure instance of this.

(3) By philosophies of "dramatism," as with our present essay. We use coordinates supplied by the contemplation of drama, yet our use of them is non-dramatic.

(4) By philosophies of "super-drama."

The last of these is new to our discussion. By "super-drama" as a movement towards the dissolution of drama, I have in mind such a notion as this: Theologies attain a dramatistic expression in the conception of God as a person. However, in such theologies God is not a person such as you and I. He is a super-person. And as a super-person, God is impersonal. Hence, his impersonality is in effect his dissolution as a person. This dramatistic consideration makes it readily clear why scholastic theology could prepare the way for the secular philosophies of science. And possibly Surrealism is to be placed as a secular variant of this fourth development.

EIGHT POEMS BY E. E. CUMMINGS

1

Old mr ly
fresh from a fu
ruddy as a sun
with blue true two

man
neral
rise
eyes

"this world's made 'bout
right it's the people that
abuses it you can git
anything you like out

of it if
you gut a mind
to there's something
for everybody it's a"

old mr lyman
ruddy as a sunrise
fresh with blue come
true from

a funeral
eyes
"big
thing"

5

YgUDuh

ydoan
yunnuhstan

ydoan o
yunnuhstan dem
yguduh ged

yunnuhstan dem doidee
yguduh ged riduh
ydoan o nudn

LISN bud LISN

dem
gud
am

lidl yelluh bas
tuds weer goin
duhSIVILEYEzum

2

Applaws)

"fell
ow
sit
isn'ts"

(a paw s

3

A salesman is an it that stinks Excuse

Me whether it's president of the you were say
or a jennelman name misder finger isn't
important whether it's millions of other punks
or just a handful absolutely doesn't
matter and whether it's in lonjewray

or shrouds is immaterial it stinks

a salesman is an it that stinks to please

but whether to please itself or someone else
makes no more difference than if it sells
hate condoms education snakeoil vac
uumcleaners terror strawberries democ
ra(caveat emptor)cy superfluous hair

or Think We've Met subhuman rights Before

4

A politician is an arse upon
which everyone has sat except a man

6

Mr u will not be missed
who as an anthologist
sold the many on the few
not excluding mr u

7

Pity this busy monster, manunkind,

not. Progress is a comfortable disease:
your victim(death and life safely beyond)

plays with the bigness of his littleness
—electrons deify one razorblade
into a mountainrange; lenses extend

unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish
returns on its unself.

A world of made
is not a world of born—pity poor flesh

and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this
fine specimen of hypermagical

ultraomnipotence. We doctors know
a hopeless case if—listen: there's a hell
of a good universe next door; let's go

8

Darling! because my blood can sing
and dance (and does with each your least
your any most very amazing now
or here) let pitiless fear play host
to every isn't that's under the spring
—but if a look should april me,
down isn't's own isn't go ghostly they

doubting can turn men's see to stare
their faith to how their joy to why
their stride and breathing to limp and prove
—but if a look should april me,
some thousand million hundred more
bright worlds than merely by doubting have
darkly themselves unmade makes love

armies (than hate itself and no
meanness unsmaller) armies can
immensely meet for centuries
and (except nothing) nothing's won
—but if a look should april me
for half a when, whatever is less
alive than never begins to yes

but if a look should april me
(though such as perfect hope can feel
only despair completely strikes
forests of mind, mountains of soul)
quite at the hugest which of his who
death is killed dead. Hills jump with brooks:
trees tumble out of twigs and sticks;

CHILDREN'S

Therese the adolescent cow

by Howard McConeghay



"The black bull had four long twisted horns,
They hurt him so he wished he had never been
born;
But what can you do when you meet so sweet a
cow
But let out a fierce and intimate bellow?"

NICHOLAS MOORE

7

Therese was an adolescent cow. She had never seen her mother, although she had heard her gentle moos as her mother went away just after Therese was born.

It is hard to be born. Not really hard to be born, but hard on the mother. It was especially hard on Therese's mother because Therese was an adolescent cow when she was born. She came out in a long string though, and it was not so hard. No, not that way.

It was cold. I think it was in September that she was born, or maybe October, or March. It was a cold day when Therese was born.

Her mother let her out in the weeds and went away. She was a gentle cow, and quiet, but Therese never did see her again. She never did see her mother because her eyes were closed. But she heard her mooing in the distance as she went away. That was Therese's mother.

She didn't know who her father was. Nobody did. One needn't always know who her father is. Not a cow.

So Therese came like a long gray string. She was not really gray, but it did look gray, and soft, and long. She was really red and she had a beautiful tail with soft thick red waves at its end. She was proud of her tail.

Cows are always chewing their cud. They are always chewing their cud and resting. But Therese did not always rest. While the other cows were lying around chewing their cud she would talk to them, going from one to another and talking. She would ask them to watch their shadows but they never did. She told them all to watch their shadows but they would not. Maybe some day one would. Therese hoped so.

Therese said the others were foolish for giving their milk to the farmer. She herself tried to bargain with him, but he would just refuse and she never let him have any milk. She said she needed it to keep her tail wavy, and I think she did.

Being born an adolescent cow, Therese never did have any childhood. Of course she did. And it was better than an ordinary existence because she was at once a child and an adult. And with the coming of time, she gained in childhood and in maturity enough to be always an adolescent cow. She was an adolescent cow when she was born and eventually it never did come that she was anything but that. That made her seem mature when she was young and young when she grew up. It was this incongruity that made her precious and dear enough to the bovine race to be worthy of a record such as this attempts to be.

Of course, Therese knew what position she occupied in the advancement of the bovine race. She spoke of it quite plainly.

Even when she was very young, she had enough faith in her own understanding for her to speak quite boldly to anyone. She was timid and shy, but she could ask anyone to watch her shadow, or look at the stars. She could say it in the best of company. Even if they didn't believe her, and they did not, not as a group, she could say it. That was very courageous for a timid adolescent: to be able to say it to the oldest and wisest cows. But Therese was really only herself when she was talking about shadows and stars or explaining to the other cows that they too could have beautiful wavy tails if they would not give their milk to the farmer, and would stop lying around always, chewing their cud. She had a few friends who listened to her but they really only noticed the stars and shadows. They never looked deeply into them. And everyone always would give the farmer her milk. Many of the cows asked why they should want beautiful tails. Their own stringy ones would keep the flies off well enough.

Therese was never contented like the other cows. Sometimes she was very sad and downhearted because the cows would be content to lie in the shade and chew their cud all day. She saw Pathos in their large, passive eyes. But often, when she had just seen her shadow in some strange and new form, she experienced delight of extacy far greater than anyone but she herself could know.

She really did realize that the world was round. But she did not quite know how far around. Because she didn't know, how could an adolescent cow know how far around the world was, she didn't leave home. Then she did know that!

She had to go part way around the world where she could find more fertile pastures to make better milk so she could have a more beautiful tail. To go part way around the world would help her to know more, and find more exciting and valuable facts with which to strengthen the structure of bovine life.

But before Therese could go part way around the world she was locked up in a barn. It was a very dark barn and she could no longer see the stars. There was no light to cast a shadow. They only fed her dry hay and soon her milk soured and her udder withered. She couldn't see her tail to know if it had lost its waves.

At first she tried to content herself by telling the rest of the cows in the barn to watch their shadows when they were driven out to the watering trough. Once she broke

out and went back to the pasture. Of course she was taken to the barn again.

She had always needed companionship but because of the radical views she held, no matter how true, she had few real friends and because she needed to think she was often alone. She wanted companionship but it was seldom she could find anyone who was interested in anything. She could not really be Therese with them. No one ever did know Therese. Sometimes her identity interfered so much that she almost didn't know herself.

Therese had one friend who, like herself, was seldom fooled by Therese's identity, and who devined what Therese really was. It was strange how much that helped Therese to have one friend. Still, one wishes there were more to understand, and feel the constructive urge as strongly as herself. Therese did. But there was only one, Elsie.

While she was in the barn, they put machines on her teats and the machines did get her milk, but Therese was sure it was no longer as sweet and rich as when she had it for herself. The machine sucked so hard that it hurt Therese and she couldn't know how to let her milk down like the other cows to make it not so bad. She did try to learn but it was no good.

She could not stop thinking of stars and shadows. She watched them whenever she got a chance. She would call to Elsie to take advantage of her freedom and to keep telling the other cows and showing them. She would desperately make plans and tell them to Elsie who was outside. Elsie would moo back and then Therese was so happy she could forget her dark confinement. But it always bore down on her.

She began to realize she would be moved on around the world into a distant barn and she wondered if there would be other alert cows with whom she could gain profound ideas and adolescent maturity. Surely she could find others, for she knew there were others.

She would think back on her past. Therese had several various stages of development. When she was very young and under the influence of her childhood training, she thought very definitely that there was a right and a wrong, and was hurt when anyone did "wrong." She thought there was no partway path and no compromise. Consequently she was a hard judge. However, as she grew in childhood and in maturity, her experiences in life made her realize that one could not be so strict. She really became quite tender toward everyone. She found it in her heart to forgive almost any fault, and her understanding grew and grew.

PAGE

Charles Henri Ford

COUNTING GAME

ONE greets the sun, mother of numbers
Two the unattainable is always the same
Three is a little child, powerful, sorrowful
Four is a giantess trembling in the crowd
Five the inspired dwarf dwells within hearing
Six holds the secret of double or nothing
Seven years ago this moment was blooming
Eight days running it went to seed and back
Nine has nine heards, ought to lose a few
Ten is the perfect sum, eight fingers, two thumbs
Eleven heaven helps if the devil doesn't
Twelve is the call to fall into the sky
Thirteen keys turn a wheel to a bannister
Fourteen portals are wound on a spool
Fifteen women hack half the night off
Sixteen days sprout all of a morning
Seventeen moons don't know where they've gone
Eighteen of anything will get you in trouble
Nineteen flowers fit somebody's body
Twenty are the towns where my false love lies
Twenty-one times and we'll start all over
Twenty-two is a nice number too
Twenty-three is lovelier than a lily's
Twenty-four can't bear it anymore
Twenty-five is sort of cracked and wise
Twenty-six has fits of fun and slumber
Twenty-seven is nobody's business
Twenty-eight is neither late nor early
Twenty-nine is part yours, more mine
Thirty is dirty behind a fine curtain
Thirty-one and you've just begun
Thirty-two is more strange than true
Thirty-three is the deathly pale tree
Thirty-four hours take leave of their senses
Thirty-five cents is not the right change
Thirty-six fixes a shadow on a hilltop
Thirty-seven's envy has yet to stop
Thirty-eight waits to see what happens
Thirty-nine knows that everything will
Forty saw the whole world rolling down a mountain
Forty-one wants one too many, finds that one's enough
Forty-two is neither here nor there
Forty-three is fair and fooled
Forty-four doesn't care
Forty-five, kept alive by love, keeps love alive
Forty-six hugs his pillow, a bag of tricks
Forty-seven is proud, marries again
Forty-eight is a state of ignorance and sin
Forty-nine tears would be beautiful
Fifty is unbelievable—but that's inevitable

Fifty-one is a song that begins, "Oh . . ."
Fifty-two and we're not near through
Fifty-three said his head ached
Fifty-four wore a rose to the occasion
Fifty-five got up in the air, dropped dead
Fifty-six, fifty-six could be the name of a bird
Fifty-seven sounds like several
Fifty-eight is Chinese
Fifty-nine is very serious, uses no make-up
Sixty you seem to have met somewhere before
Sixty-one is hard to guess today, I guess
Sixty-two makes a kiss go further
Sixty-three is just what I thought
Sixty-four, please be my candy store
Sixty-five better be let alone
Sixty-six, say it over, say it over quick
Sixty-seven is uninteresting
Sixty-eight is very interesting
Sixty-nine is bedtime
Seventy summers are not so many, all together
Seventy-one the clock is striking
Seventy-two the dawn breaks slowly (the will does too)
Seventy-three and the breeze is blowing
Seventy-four—what am I counting?
Seventy-five is not the last time the moon will rise
Seventy-six is without significance
Seventy-seven is a lucky number
Seventy-eight is far, far away
Seventy-nine is noble and old and divine
Eighty is the butterfly that lights nearby
Eighty-one and it flies to sweeter ones
Eighty-two is the stoned prophet
Eighty-three is his statue in stone
Eighty-four we'll skip
Eighty-five floods and houses don't swim
Eighty-six sprigs of grass are surprising
Eighty-seven tons of bombs are no more so
Eighty-eight works miracles gradually
Eighty-nine will believe in them
Ninety is my friend
Ninety-one floats away, his work done
Ninety-two fails to answer
Ninety-three is scrawled on the wall
Ninety-four walks to his bed and does more
Ninety-five is blind, sees inside
Ninety-six is a street in New York
Ninety-seven is the birthday of a fellow
Ninety-eight saw a poet murdered
Ninety-nine and the earth moves up and down
One hundred hearts stop, a hundred others start

5 POEMS

I AM COMING

I am following her to the wavering moon,
to a bridge by the long waterfront,
to valleys of beautiful arson,
to flowers dead in a mirror of love,
to men eating wild minutes from a clock,
to hands playing in celestial pockets,
and to that dark room beside a castle
of youthful voices, singing to the moon.

When the sun comes up she will live at a sky
covered with sparrow's blood
and wrapped in robes of lost decay.

But I am coming to the moon,
and she will be there in a musical night,
in a night of burning laughter,
burning like a road of my brain
pouring its arm into the lunar lake.

APPARITION OF
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

When an ocean of pain moves rivers and bridges
and black eyes flash in grave dust,
then the rapture of Baudelaire strikes a flaming note.

By the blood of somber countenance
hang all fifty chambers of voluptuous girls,
entranced by the poet's pulsating gleam,
that nails love only onto his giant queen,
sifting in the rays of forgotten children.

Over the laughing brothel and pale garden,
he sings on the pipe of languor
and prays on a flying altar,
drowning with every touch of the sun.

THE RUINS

Falling from tear-drops of time,
the well of hidden dreams
seems like broken ice over the sun.

Beneath its feathered mirror
love is lying, a wounded flavor,
never again to steal,
when ragged for plastic honey,
the moon's long frigid kiss.

Here is a hot wind of knives,
cutting my breath for sport,
and leaving behind a limpid song,
heard by a million murdered stars.

Balls of arson charge a flood of rats,
going down to pray with the blizzard bone;
and the sound burns through a tower,
the highest light of forbidden magic.

BY THE CURTAIN OF
ARCHITECTURE

To all religions that never began, but had to sleep
in the fountain of forgotten engineers; they have come
to the altar of a new history. . . .

Over the banners of Oedipus flies the deluge,
a tower of chafed metaphors,
miles of antique lamps,
incantations of a soiled planet,
and the weary litanies of drunken dust.

A saint pauses, reads the fire
and nails his heart on the laughing altar.

Somewhere beside child-like hands on a cross,
two men meet to bleed their bones of furniture,
to preach a sermon in the halls of Africa,
to raise their arms to a glass heaven
resting in the jellied clock of Diogenes,
to voice a music from the ruins of cities,
laid dry upon ages of ritual,
and to serve an idea of marble
rolling over the clowns' pre-historic martyrdoms,
continually breathing a shadow of decayed pianos.

THERE ARE MANY PATHWAYS
TO THE GARDEN

If you are bound for the sun's empty plum
there is no need to mock the wine-tongue;
but if you are going to a rage of pennies
over a stevedore's wax ocean,
then remember: all long pajamas are frozen dust,
unless an axe cuts my flaming grotto.

You are one for colonial lizards,
and over bath-houses of your ear
skulls shall whisper
of a love for a crab's rude whip;
and the rimless island of refusal shall seat itself
that always beats a hurricane
in the mad run for Apollo's boxing-glove.

As your fingers melt a desert,
an attempt is made to marry the lily and fig-foot dragon,
mermaids wander and play with a living cross,
a child invents a sublime bucket of red eyes,
and I set free the dawn of your desires.

The crash of your heart,
beating its way through a fever of fish
is heard in every crowd of that thirsty to-morrow,
and your trip ends in the mask of my candle-lit hair.

MYSTERY IS REDEEMED BY LIGHT

During the first two-thirds of the 16th century, as a natural consequence of the prosperity of the Low Countries under Charles V, "The Money-Changer and His Wife" appeared increasingly on canvas, displacing Saint Martin opening his cloak. Looking at several of these pictures, I tried to reconstruct the judgment brought to bear on two of them—one of Quinten Matsys, the other of Marinus van Roymerswal—by the rather intelligent interpreter who accompanied me through the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow, and whom I had trouble shaking in order to go see the Gauguins, the Redons, the Picassos at the Museum of Occidental Art.

"These realistic works," he said, "which replace those icons with gold backgrounds in the luster of which can be read the oppression of the proletariat under the clerical yoke, correspond to the ascendant period of Capitalism. But there is already apparent in the painter critical feelings, one might almost say a class feeling, of rancor. Notice in the Roysmerwal the crooked fingers, the conspicuous pile of money, the affected clothes, the sharp smile of the money-changer, the laces of his spouse. This artist is much more realistic, much greater than Matsys, because the latter is marked with a reactionary psychology; one does not see clearly enough that he takes sides for or against the capitalist system; one sees all too clearly that he is satisfied with formalism."

late in that commercial era, his creations are already dispirited, which proves further that he was not a realistic draughtsman, but rather like one for whom the soul exists and therefore who suffers from the realization of its absence in the creatures of Mammon."

Thus I discovered that a pseudo-marxist rationalism, wishing to bring to light the "manifest content," and that only, led surely to the same lack of intelligence con-

by ETIENBLE

THE MONEY-CHANGER AND HIS WIFE



Marinus van Roymerswal [Florence, Italy]

cerning the two works as the Claudelian will to deduce, in a mystic manner, the "latent content."

Why, accordingly, should I like the Matsys and feel only disgust for the Roymerswal? Did I not know how to explain to myself something that could not be elucidated by either of those two metaphysics to which the Occident clings today? The distress caused me by "The Money Changer" of Roymerswal was the identical feeling I had in front of his "Peasant at the Lawyer's" and his "Receiver of Contribu-

tions," as well as before certain frescoes of Rivera and those of Orozco that decorate the Preparatoria of Mexico. It seemed to me that I was looking at some film where a careless photographer had forgotten to turn the roll and thus showed two views of the same church superimposed. I saw at the same time what might have been done had the theme been treated in caricature and what was promised implicitly by realism. But such as it was, too remote from caricature and yet not near enough to reality, Roymerswal's "Money-Changer" left one discontented.

Social satire soon appeared to me as less responsible for its ugliness than a certain taste for the baroque, because if the money,

pieces of money, for instance, in full light in the center foreground) and the baroque of the composition, indicate, much more than any lack of intelligence in the creator, the small confidence that Roymerswal had in the intelligence of the spectator.

In fact, if the right hand of Roymerswal's money-changer is to that of Matsys', what the ease of a writer holding a pen is to the stiffness of the contracted hand of an illiterate; if the one and the other face expresses its joy, astonishment, vanity, avarice or stupidity with such an insistence that it tells us nothing more, this is only because Roymerswal painted as one who is ignorant that no esthetic pleasure exists except through an act of love between what is known as intelligence and what is known as imagination.

And while it is the intelligence that discovers in the crude complacency of the Roymerswal the cause of the displeasure it feels, the same intelligence gives thanks to Matsys for the care he has taken to defy such a complacency.

Almost everything is found in the Master which we see in the *Epigone*, and not surprisingly, since the latter copies the former. Everything but nothing. Because everything that Roymerswal multiplied into superfluous forms, attitudes, intentions, was reduced by Matsys to essentials. Look also at that other painting of Matsys, "The Ill-Matched Couple," wherein nothing distracts the attention from the contrast between the faces. In "The Money-Changer and His Wife," examine the weights, the scales, the candle (almost hidden by the coiffure of the woman), as well as the money, hardly visible precisely because we are in the rooms of a money-changer; money and candle, in any case, are more discreet than the window with its trees and sky, reflected in the medallion in the foreground. So right, finally, the hands of the individuals, the movements they design so essential that, with the rest of the decor (the sober framing of the faces), they compose an ensemble of such restfulness that it almost disappears, in this way leading our attention to the center of the picture, which is approximately the center of interest, the two heads.

THE MONEY-CHANGER AND HIS WIFE



Quinten Matsys [Musée de Louviers]

the red tape, the goitres of an exploiting class, the thinness of its victims, their toothless mouths, could indeed be explained by rancor or ideology; and if the too numerous pleats of the sleeves, the woman's laces, the immoderate head-gear of the financier, revealed the gross manners of the *nouveau riche*—even so, how could one make the large ledger, filling the entire space between the corners of the man's coiffure, an index to "social realism"? Isn't it just as difficult to justify, from this point of view, the enormous candle erect in the space above the two heads?

This profusion of indiscreet details (the

How can one refuse, at this stage, to recognize a knowing and intentional stylization, one signifying that Matsys did not love the real world, but simply understood that the laws of a work of art are not necessarily those of nature *en son plein*? How ignore, either, that this exercise of the critical and poetical intelligence aims to present an enigma, and to fix on the lowered lids of the money-changer the attention, the curiosity, the intelligence and the imagination of the spectator? So much precision, so much dryness, are present only to liberate

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films and the war

by KENNETH MACPHERSON

The "commercial" film can enlighten as well as drug or disgust. There is no reason to believe that first-rate "commercial" films should fail of any standard set. There has been improvement technically and intrinsically. The public is developing a film sense, an intuition and swiftness of eye, a grasp of implication and reference, which a few years ago were not there. It is strange that Hollywood from which all technical innovations have come should have feared to take the plunge in other respects. It is not fear of things of the mind so much as the shadow of the banking combines and the fact that the population of South Raub, Indiana, of Nez Perce, Idaho, of Enterprise, Utah, of Eureka, Nevada, might be alienated if not infuriated by any but a star system with all its idolatry and comfortably undemanding liturgy.

There is, however, a place in Hollywood for what once we fondly alluded to as the experimental film. It is astounding that after so many years these fabulous laboratories have not set aside even one department for the improvement of their product. It is astounding that even this war of indescribable significance and magnitude should have failed to impress any but the pot-boilers' department.

The U. S. Army newspaper in London, *Stars and Stripes*, was sufficiently incensed by the type of war film Hollywood is making to complain with bitterness. Men who fight will have none of the rubbish which is put forth in their praise by catch-penny opportunists. Elsa Maxwell thinks that Hollywood should be forbidden by law to make patriotic or war pictures. I think they should be compelled to make them. Not, of course, in their present form. The War Activities Commission, which is Hollywood's contribution to the war effort (apart from its other misdemeanors) produces Victory shorts. They are not good. One of the worst was *You John Jones*, to be remembered with a shiver; a little sermon with a little girl. These shorts are usually a signal for people to shift in and out of theatres; some get up, some come in, everyone is on the move. What these films should achieve, and could with ease, is to keep people riveted where they are. Let it be hoped they improve; they could be of help.

The star system still exists and this is not the time to fuss about it. The stars have done extensive work for the Treasury and for the morale of the armed forces. They would be willing to offer their services in films of which the A. E. F. could be proud instead of ashamed, and so would producers, directors, scenarists, cameramen, designers, technicians of all kinds.

The big companies like Warner Brothers, Metro Goldwyn Mayer, R.K.O., the various trade unions—the whole of Hollywood—should cooperate to form a unit to study contemporary problems and produce films for the masses—for South Raub, Nez Perce, Enterprise and Eureka—which would deal with the war in an inspiring as well as instructive manner. All these little towns have men in the services; they don't need to be told how to feel. An intelligent and conscientious unit of this nature, with all the limitless power of Hollywood behind it, could render immense service, not only to the United Nations, but to selfish Hollywood itself, at this time so greatly in need of an ideological blood-bank.

At one time this writer spent several years in a losing battle to make people believe that films were potentially a great

art form. Gertrude Stein was not alone when she said No! in her firm way. Art, said she, depended on "continuous emotion." But so do films, detective novels and love affairs. Films, she said, could not be art because they were mechanical. A camera was a camera and negative was negative and what you photographed was what you photographed and it was a photograph and a photograph was not art. Fifteen years later, Man Ray has said more or less the same thing. It is an old argument, unimportant at the moment, for in looking back, the best films were the Russian ones and they were factual. What matters is that films are potentially a great educator: greater even than the radio, for although the radio reaches more people, "seeing is believing," whereas to hear is to doubt. The eye we trust, the ear almost never. Hearing, we ask "Is it true?" and often add "I must see for myself." Also, "Do you see?" "Let me see!" and so on. The use of the word is not accidental.

People go to the cinema for entertainment. It is an old blague that entertainment entails leaving the mind at home, neatly folded. Quite the saddest evidence of this as an applied principle is the theatre. A few playwrights who have not been to Europe since 1939 have written about the war in Europe, and at least one who had been through the London blitz has written about the London blitz. Why? As a public service? To enlighten us? Or to fatten off the stuff of heroism?

A far-from-brilliant musical show broke all records because it was put on by the army, and this was war-time, and what was moving was this sense of war-time and its changes, italicising the gallant spectacle of the soldiers at play. Reality.

Till times change, it is the end of pretending. That is why, in England, Noel Coward's film was not an unqualified success. One celebrated critic broke his pencil jabbing on his inoffensive pad, "From This We Swerve!" The dust of the Battle of Britain was still in the air. Coward was too, and when he tried to make a film of it all he fell into a confusion of hysteria, anecdote and tears. His intention is to be respected, but the result must be taken for what it is worth. He was trying to focus a subject too large for any lens and to condense history's greatest tragedy into a slick feuilleton.

The fiction film is running a hopeless race. It must learn to leave the war alone, or—

It there something that can be done with it?

Such films come in increasing numbers. *Air Force*, *Hitler's Children*, *Edge of Darkness*, *Assignment in Brittany*, *Hangmen Also Die*, *Commandos Strike at Dawn*, *Crash Dive*—to name a few. They must be listed as failures. For all their good intentions and sometimes meritorious handling, mostly they embarrass or offend. *Mission to Moscow*, taken from Joseph E. Davies' ambassadorial reports, is a wrong stab in the right direction. *Desert Victory*, a camera record of General Montgomery's drive from Egypt to Tripoli, is, by common consent, the most important film yet made. There is no parallel in any other medium for the intense excitement of this documentaire. It may be asked, is such excitement necessary? Is it essential to clutch the arms of one's chair or neighbour and rise half out of one's seat for a movie to be good? Obviously, no. This

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In war-time, Hollywood war films, which throw a mist over the mind by way of the eyes, defeat their own purpose. Their purpose is propaganda, and the Office of War Information has instructed film makers in the new discipline of dramatic convention. Even films which do not deal with the war take a deep breath and falter through today's lesson. Once, only the Hays Office cared about screen morality and we, the public, were strong in incorruption. Now the OWI ordains a new type of stalwart—this time on the screen—the phenomenal patriot; one who, caught in no matter what stressful circumstance, remembers country first; much in the manner of one who snatches a burning roast from the oven before running to answer the door-bell.

This is excellent in principle. If Mrs. Miniver wastes time and money buying hats in peace-time, she is the very one to deal with a German parachutist in her victory garden. The most heedless among us has inner forces of worth, and these in wartime must be drafted.

But what happens when we leave a movie theatre in which *The Moon is Down* or in which *Hangmen Also Die*? A lump may be in our throats and courage in our hearts (despite what we've seen!) but the newsstand at the corner puts our hearts in our mouths and our hopes in the sky. There is the drama. Today, drama is headlines, radio and the documentary film. It is the streets with uniforms, the telephone, the Western Union, railroad stations, convoys, Victory letters, a map of the world. It was, somewhat fantastically, in uniforms among the red cassocks of the Westminster Choir as they sang the St. Matthew Passion at Easter. The incongruity of this reminder of our days was, indeed, a reminder of our days, as well as of the days they commemorated. Fiction has ceded drama to reality. Its midnight has come.

Is this necessary? Must its dim-out be moonless too? Are not the attempts to use fiction as a parable a sign that it can be of help? It will depend on several things—upon new concepts; a reconsideration of old ones; a blue-print of its aims.

Money, the first of its aims, can be the first to dismiss, for without money no films could be made, and so films have to make money. Rents, salaries, wages, and general overhead, take care of that. Films are expensive to make and expensive to show. Profit is a sinister word. But Hollywood films are made for profit—for as much profit as possible. Without the tottering buttresses of high finance and all its flimsy inner structure; without having to wag a tail and be winning; what fine films might be made! Great minds, great technicians, great poets, musicians, artists—everybody is available, and there is nothing to stop it all except balancing a budget and then making profit, profit, profit.

With this blight upon them, is it possible for "commercial" films to aim high at all? To say no is to admit they are made for a rabble audience and should be left where they belong. This, fortunately, is untrue.

The London Literary Scene

b y

GEORGE WOODCOCK

A country at war is not a good place for concentrating on masterpieces. In the 1914-18 war, for instance, very little important writing was produced in England itself. And in this war the interference in the lives of those people who are not actually absorbed into the forces is much greater than it was in the last war. So it does not seem likely that we may expect any major works to be written in England at the present time. There may be some odd neutral corner of the earth whose an exile may turn out to be another Joyce writing another *Ulysses*. But I doubt it . . . Even Ireland, the country in Europe most detached from the conflict, has been affected more than some of the remote parts of England itself were in the last war. This, as I explained in my last letter, arises from the peculiar nature of this war, in which the national war between Allies and Axis has become subordinate in its actual effect on the lives of the people to the conflict between the international rulers and the international ruled.

As in the last war, poetry has come back with a bang. Much of it is being written and also read. The early months of the war, marked by the breakup of all the creeds and dogmas, political and aesthetic, which had dominated the poetry of the last decade, were extremely barren in their output of significant verse. The poets who found a voice before the war became, for the most part, virtually silent, and no new writers appeared, or, at least, found any means of making themselves heard. The verse magazines, *New Verse*, *Twentieth Century Verse*, closed down, the production of anthologies dwindled, and it looked as if this war would have no poetry at all. The fogeys began to ask the stupid question 'Where are the War Poets?' Cecil Day Lewis replied in a scrap of verse which reveals so blatantly the ineptitude of his generation when faced with the war that it deserves quotation in full:

They who in panic or mere greed
Enslaved religion, markets, laws,
Borrow our language now and bid
Us to speak in freedom's cause.

It is the logic of our times,
No subject for immortal verse,
That we who lived by honest dreams
Defend the bad against the worse.

The Old Guard, Noyes, Dunsany, etc., hastened to make up for the lack of a Rupert Brooke, and marched into the columns of the Sunday newspapers with patriotic pompositis at which Kipling would have blushed. Their standard bearer was the notorious Lord Vansittart, our leading racial fanatic.

As yet Rupert Brooke has not come back from the dead. Nor do we expect him. The poetry which is being written now in surprising abundance either ignores the war or, where it consciously treats of it, does so rather in the spirit of Owen. All poets when they deal with the war, whether they are in the army or dodging in some government job or standing out as anti-militarists, become, as Owen described himself, 'conscientious objectors with very seared consciences.' A few try, lamely, to justify themselves conditionally in the Day Lewis manner. The majority discuss the war with varying degrees of distaste. There is none of the unpleasant, but quite sincere lust for glory which inspired, say, Julian Grenfell's *Into Battle*.

Anthologies of wartime poetry are becoming common, as well as specialised collections like Keidrych Rhys's *Poems from the Forces*. Tambimuttu's *Poetry* (London) has been revived on an ambitious scale, and there are a number of smaller poetry papers in action now, like Wrey Gardiner's *Poetry Quarterly*. The best recent collection of verse is Roy Fuller's *The Middle of a War*, and the best recent anthology Julian Symons's *Anthology of War Poems* in the Pelican Books. The older poets have produced very little since the war began, except for T.S. Eliot's sequence, ending in the recent poem *Little Gidding*, which completes what is technically the most consummate and philosophically the most barren poetic work of the war.

It is about time I left books and said something about the writers, in particular about their attitude to the war. They can be divided roughly into two classes, the over thirty-fives and the under thirty-fives, with the Spender-MacNeice group as the borderland. The attitude of the older group can, within the limitations that apply to all generalisations, be described fairly by Christina Rossetti's couplet:

'Come cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we
steer'—

As the soldier remarked whose post lay in
the rear.

Most of them have acquired good jobs in such funkholes as the British Broadcasting Corporation or the Ministry of Information, at worst in the civil defence services, and from their comparative safety and comfort, like Auden from America, attempt to justify the war and drive on to death those who, for lack of influence or age, have failed to acquire such pleasant positions as themselves. In their easy posts, however, many of them feel uneasy, for the intellectual, after all, is less thick-skinned than the politician and can see, perhaps a little too clearly for his own comfort, the incongruity of his former revolutionary or libertarian ideals (often still professed) and the blimps (both blue and pink) with whom he runs in harness. As an illustration of the way in which such intellectuals (often men of the greatest honesty of intent) rationalise their position, I will quote part of a letter I received from a well-known English writer who now occupies a responsible wartime position in the B.B.C.

'As to the ethics of broadcasting and in general letting oneself be used by the British ruling class. It's of little value to argue about it; it is chiefly a question of whether one considers it more important to down the Nazis first or whether one believes doing this is meaningless unless one achieves one's own revolution first. But for heaven's sake don't think I don't see how they are using me. A subsidiary point is that one can't effectively remain outside the war and by working inside an institution like the B.B.C. one can perhaps deodorise it to some small extent. I doubt whether I shall stay in this job very much longer, but while here I consider I have kept our propaganda slightly less disgusting than it might otherwise have been . . .'

That, I think, speaks clearly enough to need no analysis, and represents fairly the form of self-justification that might be expressed by any one of these radical intellectuals in the pay of the ruling class. The

vague social-democracy which is all that is left to them of a revolutionary conscience revolts against the reactionary interests they realise they are serving, but the material attraction of a security (for the duration) such as they have never known before, proves an irresistible bait and makes them desire in effect the continuation of a war which, in theory and in conscience, they know to be against the immediate interests of humanity and the long-term interests of their own class.

The borderline generation has gone almost the same way as the elders. It was among writers of this group, such men as Spender, Auden, Isherwood, Day Lewis, etc., that the Communist influence was most strong during the 1930's. The outbreak of war, however, with the Stalinist somersault into the Russo-German alliance, was more than these fairly intelligent men could swallow, and all except one or two of the more stupid have drifted into a curious political *No Man's Land* which, certainly in the case of Spender and Auden, and probably in the case of some of the others, can be defined only as a kind of social democracy obscured by mysticism and tending uncertainly towards anarchism. Spender, for instance, has attacked politicians and political means, and Auden in his recent poetry has talked against the state and the 'lie of authority'. (Although Auden, living in America, is hardly part of the subject of a London letter, I mention him because of the influence his poetry and ideas still wield in this country.) In spite, however, of their promising leanings, the men of the New Signatures school support the war as solidly as the Old Guard, as can be seen from the magazine *Horizon*, which represents the respectable liberalism into which their movement has sunk after three years of war.

Among the younger writers, those in the twenties and the early thirties, a different attitude prevails, which is strongly represented in the poetry now being written and also in some of the younger literary periodicals. Most of these young men have not the influence to get into safe jobs, so they are often obliged to go into the army or make an anti-militarist stand as conscientious objectors. Many young writers have faced the tribunals and some have been imprisoned for their resistance. Many more have gone unwillingly into the army, and from these young men in the forces we get little of the hypocritical flag wagging of their elders. They know what the war is, and intend to get out of it as quickly as they can.

The younger writers, then, are mainly opposed to the war. They do not like the British government and have no particular desire to see it survive the war. They realise more strongly, because their position is more acute, how they have been defrauded by the politicians and the parties. None of the existing political groups, Tory, Labour, Communist, is likely to gain their enthusiasm. Nor, in spite of what George Orwell says in the *Partisan Review*, can I see any sign of their readiness to receive a Fascist Messiah. They are, then, defeatist and anti-political. Their defeatism ranges from mere indifference to anarchist revolutionary defeatism. Their antagonism to politics likewise ranges from a mere inactive disgust to active and revolutionary opposition to authority and the state. The progression in each case is from the passive many to the active and revolutionary few. Most of them,

like most of the awakening workers, are still in the state of an indefinite discontent. Of the more conscious many are pacifists, and a fair number profess anarchism. Some are Trotskyist, but there is no group of Trotskyist intellectuals analogous to the group in New York. The actual number who make any revolutionary effort is, however, very small.

To end, I will mention one matter which may not be so irrelevant as it seems to the subject of this letter. Lord Beaverbrook, early last month, made a sensational speech in the House of Lords, in which he said, 'A change has occurred in the constitutional structure of this country which has profound and far reaching consequences. The House of Commons no longer represents the constituencies in the ordinary sense. It prolongs its own life by statute, and it has co-opted nearly a hundred members without consultation with the electorate. The majority of M.P.'s were elected on peace issues and to preserve the limitation of arms.'

So much for the democracy for which our elder writers are fighting so vigorously at desk and microphone.

FILMS AND THE WAR

(Continued from Page 59)

happens to be an instance where it could not be otherwise. Not only is the enactment Homeric in the most epic sense, as well as, inevitably in the sense of the hymns or prefatory addresses, but the mechanics of the film have been handled with an admirable sense of the relativity of war's inferno to a world waiting at home. The pause before the zero hour, the striking of Big Ben, the voice broadcasting news of the victory and the lifting faces of the factory workers, too used to news of reverses and continued hardship; this paragraphing of material, with the use of cross reference and counterpoint in thematic development, is the perfect, the finely-balanced marriage of reality and art.

It would be interesting to see more of the Russian war films, and see them intact. The *Siege of Leningrad* and *Russia at War* were much cut. Any document of the great Russian triumphs is imperishable in history and should not be treated as casual program material. In spite of it, they retained much of their overwhelming value and power.

Apart from these records of the present, it is time to look to the future. Most films wince at today or brandish fists while waiting for the love scene, or decorate the near-past with scrolls and gusty sighs of courage. The post-war world is perhaps a frightening subject for conjecture and for reconstruction theories. No missionaries, no engineers can begin to settle or develop it, but it is not a myth, it is not so far away that we cannot imagine it.

Ideologically, a new Mayflower will have to set sail, perhaps even a new ark. Nothing can be lost by having both ready and equipped to sail at a moment's notice. People are beginning to think, to plan, to argue, to demand a world established in equity and peace. Let the screen serve in laying a foundation for a better order. The danger of apathy and reaction, the danger even of sheer fatigue when the war is done, the danger of greedy nationalism, of cynical imperialism, of frightful revenge, of anarchy, of political brigandage, of economic chaos, of decimating civil wars; the danger of total loss of all for which the allies are fighting; should be foreseen, examined, understood and averted. Many feel unconsciously that there is no future, or at least, that this is not the time to think about it. That is the attitude of 1918. The future and its problems should become the chief concern of makers of films not only in the United Nations, but in those to be vanquished.

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EXHIBITION

"O THIS IS THE CREATURE THAT DOES NOT EXIST"

The best modern poems are often "notes" on a secret experimental activity conducted by the poet in order systematically to transform the visible world. The poems themselves are very special records of very special happenings and combinations. Only the academic or commercial poet today seems willing to follow the "classical" procedure of *making* verses out of any love affair or landscape that will lend itself to a pre-conceived idea of a "good poem."

As the record of an experiment, a poem points not to itself as thing but to the activity behind it. This activity continues whether or not it produces poems—though it is, of course, altered somewhat, when the "note-making" begins, by the very process of watching itself.

Sometimes, therefore, modern poems have no "form." Often however, the poet may find it important to use a very regular pattern for his poetic "notes." There may be a ritualistic element in his experiment that demands to be recorded in fixed meters and rhymes. Or perhaps a certain kind of verbal play is needed to represent the particular event. Or he may want to give his poem a conventional verbal look for the sake of irony.

In Wallace Stevens' new book, called "*Notes toward a Supreme Fiction*,¹" each "note" has twenty-one iambic pentameters divided into seven three-line stanzas. Rainer Maria Rilke's "*Sonnets To Orpheus*,²" which have just appeared in a new translation,³ is also a sequence of "notes" despite the sonnet form—the poet has said that "The Sonnets show details from this activity" (of "transforming the earth").

Before talking about Stevens' Supreme Fiction and Rilke's *Orpheus*, I should like to apply the foregoing observations on modern poetry to another book of Rilke translations just out. Jessie Lemont's wide collection of Rilke's shorter poems⁴ lives up to comments on the jacket that she has done her translations so skillfully that they hardly seem translated at all. The trouble is that too often they hardly seem Rilke at all. If we were merely after good poems as closely as possible equivalent to Rilke's, we might not mind this. But if we see Rilke's poems as notes on how he transformed the world, Miss Lemont's effort to make good English poems seems misguided. For the translations tend to miss the Rilke experiment and *discovery*—the peculiar way things behaved for him. For instance, when Rilke writes in the sonnet about the taste of fruits

Dies kommt von weit,
Wird euch langsam namenlos im Munde?
Miss Lemont's

There come slowly from afar,
Namelessly in the mouth yet unsurmised,
Discoveries . . .

does not give us what is going on. While Herter Norton's

1. *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction*, by Wallace Stevens. The Cummings Press, Cummings, Mass.

2. *Sonnets To Orpheus*, by Rainer Maria Rilke. Translated by M. D. Herter Norton. W. W. Norton, Inc., N. Y. \$2.50.

3. Rainer Maria Rilke, Poems, translated by Jessie Lemont. Columbia University Press, N. Y. \$3.00.

This comes from far. Is something indescribable slowly happening in your mouth? does.

It would be incorrect to say that Miss Lemont cannot capture Rilke's "turn;" she does it wherever the poems *she* is writing allows her to. Rilke is there except when the needs of conventional English verse force him out of the frame, which happens somewhere in every poem. Then we get good poems but lose the poetic event. From the academic point of view, no one could expect more from a translation. But is the "poem" so important, especially an academic poem? In Rilke we want "the uninterrupted news that grows from silence." We want the exact verbal happening, which is the poem itself.

Herter Norton's approach to the Sonnets is correct, though anyone may have his own preferences as to details and passages. She recognizes the unique quality of modern poetry when she says, "the closest adherence to the poetry itself is best achieved through the most literal possible rendering of word, phrase, image." The poet himself was trying to arrive at just such exactness, rather than at the traditional "poem."

The movement of objects in Rilke, the way the images form themselves *from the inside out*—

Torn open by us ever and again,
the god is the place that heals.

or

Yet because they loved it,
a pure creature happened.—
comes from his carefully formulated method of seeing. By practice this method constantly grew more spontaneous and continuous, and his language more habituated to catching the new phenomena it produced. His theory of nature "becoming invisible" in man stopped being merely a theory when the tension of the object he had absorbed gave it a twist that discharged it backwards from his eye as from a mirror.

Rilke was in the line of Poe, Baudelaire and Rimbaud, of those "heretical" modern poets who took from religion its angels and demons and set them into motion as hypotheses—in order to see what these fictions were capable of as powers of man. If god did not exist, it was necessary to imitate him. The dead cannot be brought back,

But he, the conjuror, let him
under the eyelid's mildness
mix their appearance into everything seen.

Stevens does not transform the world, but he talks about it as no other living poet can. Some of the most perfect lyrics of this unbelievable New Englander are in the "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction." Without forgetting his guitar or his horse-play, he has walked like a master into the deepest theme of modern poetry, the creation of the unreal.

(It is worth stopping to say Cummings' Press has turned out a very beautiful book—paper, binding, design, drawings, all apt. The price was not mentioned, but the book is worth it).

Stevens' program is to get along without the angels. He is not like Rilke, bent on

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"saving" nature; but he wants to keep the real and the non-existent from getting the human persona down. An absolute—yes. Even a beloved absolute—"single, certain truth . . . in which we sit at rest, for a moment in the central of our being." But Stevens—and this is rare—will not accept a revived myth. No angels, no Apollo.

To find the real,
To be stripped of every fiction except one,
The fiction of an absolute—Angel,
Be silent in your luminous cloud and hear
The luminous melody of proper sound.

The three requirements for Stevens' Supreme Fiction are given in the titles of the three sections of his book: "IT MUST BE ABSTRACT"—"IT MUST CHANGE"—"IT MUST GIVE PLEASURE." Rilke said that his angel was not so much a Christian as a Mohammedan angel. Stevens' deities has relatives by Picasso.

MAGIC

(Continued from Page 46)

and artists. Naturally, what has come down to us today of their creations is far from what they imagined. Innumerable generations have added the diamonds they discovered as well as the dull metal which they mistook for gold. The transformation of the matriarchal society—which had seen myths being born—into a patriarchal society, the migrations, wars and invasions which impoverished or enriched the myths, all helped to metamorphose them. In the animistic myths of the first ages, gods were already fermenting—the same gods who later were to put poetry into the straitjacket of religious dogmas. While it is true that poetry grows in the rich earth of magic, the pestilential miasmas of religion rise from the same ground and poison poetry—it must be set high above these noxious strata, if it is to regain its vigor.

The tribe of poets has little by little lost contact with the spirits of our fabulous totemic ancestors. They occupy such a high place in the skies that they now dominate the world where their first mumblings were heard, and have given to sorcerers and magicians the privilege of maintaining poetic contact with them. Mythical poetry, by becoming the exclusive possession of sorcerers, steadily got poorer and poorer until it was ossified into religious dogma. Thus, the most primitive tribes, those which have the least contact with occidental civilization and its religion and have the largest number of sorcerers, have myths of great poetic exuberance but few moral precepts. On the other hand, more evolved peoples see their myths lose their poetic brilliance while multiplying their moral restrictions! It's just as if morality were the enemy of poetry! Indeed, it is obvious that the absurd, not to say repugnant, morality of hypocrisy, vileness and cowardice which is prevalent in present-day society is not only the mortal enemy of poetry but of life itself! Conservative morality can only be the morality of the prison or death.

Religion is "the illusion of a world which needs illusion," said Karl Marx. Certainly, if a world ever needed illusion it is the one we live in! But is a perfectly harmonious world—one in which there would be no need—conceivable? Such a world is just one more illusion: the horizon receding before our steps. Eldorado itself becomes indefinitely perfectible as soon as one lives in it. Tomorrow has advantages which we will always covet no matter how dazzling the present may seem. It does not necessarily follow that this illusion will be of the nature of religious dupery—that heavenly felicities will compensate for the wretched poverty of slave life. That sort of illusion belongs to the world of violence and horror whose inevitable end is at hand. The new world, which shows signs of coming into being, will set out to destroy hell on earth and replace it with the absolute heaven of religion, metamorphosed into a relatively human paradise. Just as an infernal life requires heavenly consolation, so a more harmonious world than ours implies an exalted and living illusion of life for the future generations which will perfect it. This collective illusion, that will remain forever unsatisfied, will thus constantly be renewed.

The primitive myth, devoid of consolation and including only elementary taboos, is nothing but poetic exaltation. The reason is simple: in primitive tribes the division of work is such that there are no notable differences of status among the members. They form an almost completely homogeneous group whose essential needs—there are no others!—are more or less satisfied. At least, some do not die of hunger while others burst with plenty!

As a society grows it develops inequalities of condition. These are sanctioned, justified and emphasized by moral restrictions and law. The future world will seek to do away with these inequalities by applying the principle: from each according to his means, to each according to his needs—and thus the necessity of a divinity which, in an illusory way, compensates for social inequality, would disappear. Religion would evaporate, but the poetic myth, purified of its religious content, would be as necessary as ever. Religion today still succeeds in carrying on because it continues to satisfy—at five and ten cent rates—the need for the marvellous, a need which is deep in the heart of the masses. Another modern phenomenon is the creation of atheistic myths, completely lacking in poetry and planned to nourish and direct a latent religious fanaticism of people who have lost contact with divinity but whose need for religious consolation persists. Thirty or forty centuries ago, the superhuman chief, quasi-deified during his lifetime, would have been elevated to some Olympus after his death—had he died at the height of his success. Doesn't Hitler say that he is "an ambassador of Providence," a sort of German Messiah? Doesn't Stalin take the title, "The Sun of the People"—which is more than the Inca who only thought of himself as the son of the sun? Are not both Stalin and Hitler supposed to possess divine infallibility? These attempts to attribute divine qualities to mortal persons, who shine with glory and supernatural virtues, show how material conditions, creating the need of religious consolation, persist side by side with religious anguish, which, having been led astray, must be directed towards a leader.

"Poetry should be made by all—not by one." This injunction of Lautréamont will no doubt be heard some day because poetry has already been the fruit of the active and passive collaboration of entire peoples. If primitive societies constitute the childhood of humanity—as is commonly admitted—the present-day world is its reformatory, its prison. But the doors of the prison will open and humanity will again find her perpetual youth at the prospect of liberty. The myths and legends of primitive people show how great was their liberty of mind. So great in fact that few men will admit its greatness, most calling it delirium instead. Such works may well seem behind us, in back of the dark underground region in which we live. But at the other end, the exit which we are approaching, there is light, light so blinding that we cannot yet distinguish the objects it illuminates and can scarcely imagine ourselves ever being in such splendor.

Primitive man does not yet know himself but seeks his identity. Modern man has lost his way. The man of tomorrow must first find himself, recognize himself and, contradictorily, become conscious of himself. He will have the means to do so. Perhaps he already has them, without being able to use them, because he is not free to think under present conditions. If the man of yesterday, who knew no limits to his thought but those of his desire, was able, despite his struggle against Nature, to produce marvellous legends, what could not the man of tomorrow create—he who will be conscious of his own nature and will dominate the world more and more because his mind will be freed from all shackles?

Just as myths and legends are the collective poetic product of societies in which social inequalities were so slight that they could not bring about any marked oppression, the collective practice of poetry is only conceivable in a world freed from all oppression—a world in which poetic thought will once again be as natural to man as seeing or sleeping. This will be the "universal progressive poetry" which Frederick Schle-

gel foresaw some 150 years ago. This poetic thought, developing without any restrictions, will create exalted myths—myths whose essence will be the marvellous, a quality which will no longer frighten thought as it does today. These myths will be devoid of religious consolation since there would be no need of that in a world whose object would be the provocative and tempting chimera of an unattainable perfection.

It should not be inferred, however, that all the people will directly participate in poetic creation. But, instead of its being the work of a few individuals, it will be the life and thought of vast groups of men animated by the spirit of the masses. The bond between the poets and the people, which has been broken for so many centuries, will be restored. Today society subjects the masses to a miserable existence which—as has already been mentioned—keeps them away from poetry. But the aspiration towards poetry remains latent in the masses. The popularity of stupidly sentimental literature, adventure novels, etc., reveals this need of poetry. In our days, poetry has become the almost exclusive attribute of a small number of individuals who are the only persons to realize—more or less clearly—it's necessity.

Spurious poetry for the use of the masses is intended to satisfy their necessity of poetry and also to provide a safety valve to regulate their spiritual pressure. It offers them a sort of escape or consolation to make up for their burnt-out religious faith and it turns their desire for the irrational into harmless channels. Just as the masters think that religion is necessary for the people they judge that authentic poetry is harmful to society, because it might help to emancipate the people. The masters are suspicious of the subversive nature of poetry. Therefore, they make every effort to stifle it and to an extent they have succeeded in creating an actual zone of silence around poetry in which it has become rarefied.

Finally, the constantly decreasing number of poets—fortunately, some still exist!—emphasizes this rupture between poets and the masses and shows again that present-day society is suffering the pangs of death. There is an analogy between our period and the end of feudal French society. Although the latter was marked by an expansion of philosophic thought which created the intellectual basis of the régime now in gestation, it was also characterised by a dearth of poetry. There was not a single French poet worthy of the name in the 18th century. And those who called themselves poets were soon reduced by Romanticism to dust, which settled on the sedan chairs and the wigs forgotten in musty attics.

It was Romanticism that re-discovered the marvellous and gave it a revolutionary significance which it has kept to this day, and which has allowed it to live—like an outlaw, but to live, nevertheless. I say outlaw because the real poet cannot be recognized as such if he does not oppose the world in which he lives by total nonconformism. He combats everyone, including the revolutionists who take a purely political viewpoint—which must necessarily be isolated from the cultural movement as a whole—and who advance the idea that culture should give way to the attainment of the social revolution. There is not a single poet or artist, conscious of his place in society, who does not think that this urgently needed and indispensable revolution is the key of the future. However, the idea of submitting poetry and all culture dictatorially to a political movement seems to me as reactionary as to want to keep them separated from politics. The "ivory tower" is only one face of the obscurantist's coin—the other face is "proletarian art." While the reactionaries would like to make poetry the lay equivalent of

(Continued on Page 66)

View Listens

RE "THE ART OF ESCAPE"

To the Editors:

I would like to make the following comment on Harold Rosenberg's very interesting study of the "art of escape":

1) If I understood him correctly, Rosenberg believes that society's reaction toward the prisoner's escape is determined by the political pattern of the body social. In a democracy, Rosenberg explains, "the fugitive successfully completes his work when he has defeated the police in a professional engagement . . . society as a whole remains a spectator of the chase . . ." Whilst in a totalitarian state an escape is "a small revolution" as each citizen is obliged "to choose between becoming a policeman or a fugitive, an informer or an accessory." But if in this country a Sacco or a Vanzetti, instead of remaining in prison till the hour of their execution, had succeeded in escaping, doesn't Rosenberg believe that the American society would not have remained a spectator? And is it not possible to imagine that in a totalitarian state there are jail-breaks whose relation to society is not altered by the escape? In a totalitarian state, "society as a whole" is no more interested than in a democratic state to save a Landru or a Dillinger from the pursuit of "the professional body," the police. According to Roman Law the paterfamilias could dispose at will of the life of his descendants. Today such a conception of paternal authority shocks our sense of moral values, and society as a whole, be it totalitarian or democratic, would certainly not help a man, condemned for killing his own child, to escape from the gestapo.

The political pattern of the body social therefore cannot serve as criterion for formulating judgments on the qualitative difference of the human environment's behavior with regard to the prisoner's escape.

2) Rosenberg's error consists in the fact that he has studied escape from the point of view of the *organ of escape*, i.e., the fugitive, and not from the point of view of the *function of escape*. It is only by studying this second case that he would have formulated laws of development. Escape is linked to the notion of crime. The crime, and not escape, is the *concrete reality* which conditions the reactions of the body social and of antagonistic classes. The crime is a desecration, and rulers have always been preoccupied with the problem of obliterating all attempts at profanation. The punishment is a compensation—at least whenever it can be accepted as *just*; that is to say, as *sacred*. But when the dominated for one reason or another no longer accept their rulers' conception of sacredness, opinions on what is just or unjust come into open conflict and all methods of profanation, from desecration to avowed cooperation with profanators (or criminals), are used by the oppressed in their struggle against dominating ideologies and religions. What Harold Rosenberg therefore considers as the art of escape is an expression of an individual's revolt against a verdict of his rulers. As Rosenberg very clearly points out this is an art insofar as every technical achievement is an art. But as no art can be pure, the critic's role consists in all fields, from painting to escape, in proving that purity is an illusion, self extrication an impossibility, and profanation a condition of progress in a "religious" society.

NICOLAS CALAS
New York City

MR. ROSENBERG'S REPLY

To the Editors:

Calas wants to deal with the art of escape from the point of view of the crime for which the fugitive was originally imprisoned. It seems to him, apparently, that the crime sets the conditions with which the fugitive has to cope. Social forms, such as democracy and totalitarianism, appear to him irrelevant. Thus he argues that if a robber escaped in a totalitarian society the obstacles he would have to overcome would be the same as those he would meet in a democratic society. While a political prisoner escaping in a democracy would be in the same boat as a similar fugitive under totalitarianism.

Unfortunately, Calas cites no evidence to support his argument that the nature of the crime influences the situation of the fugitive. He asks about Sacco and Vanzetti, who did not escape, and about Dillinger and Landru, who were not Germans.

But even these hypothetical illustrations suggest the fallacy in Calas' reasoning. Had Sacco or Vanzetti escaped, the crime with which they were charged, which was murder, would not have aroused people to take sides. Nor would the fact that some people regarded them as "political prisoners." What might have aroused participation in the escape (assuming that it would have been aroused, and also assuming that they would have been willing to escape—which is a very far-fetched assumption, indeed) would have been the belief that justice had been violated—that American law, according to which there is no such thing as a "political prisoner," had been put aside by a professional judicial body which was not playing the game according to our rules . . . Thus the escape would have taken place under conditions determined not by the crime but by society's attitude towards the fugitive and his pursuers.

On the other hand, if a "Landru" were escaping in Germany, society could not remain a spectator, because the Gestapo does not permit passivity towards its projects. The whole meaning of totalitarianism lies in the fact that every act, no matter how personal, is conceived as an act for or against the State. The State forces the intervention of society, and outlaws all indifferences and neutrality. Every crime is therefore a political crime.

Of course, German totalitarian theories have not been thoroughly realized in fact in German society, and therefore the escape of a robber there might not actually arouse the same degree of social participation as that of an actual political enemy. But theoretically anyone to whom the State is hostile is not merely a criminal but tainted, and must therefore be regurgitated by society. Under these circumstances the escape has no relation to the nature of the crime. This is shown clearly if we take the case of a Negro fugitive in some regions of the South—a perfect example of an escape not carried out under democratic conditions. The fugitive may be completely innocent, or he may be a Communist organizer, or a pickpocket or murderer—it makes no difference. He is hunted in exactly the same way, as a Negro. And protected as a Negro by other Negroes. The conditions of his escape are determined not by his crime but by the fact that he is a Negro.

Calas forgets that not all fugitives are criminals. Yet the same talents are needed

to evade the knife of the cannibal as that of the avenger.

The art of escape involves human skill and science in overcoming obstacles, whether these are set by nature or society. The aim of this art is freedom. For this reason the fugitive and his trials have about them something elevated and mysterious which has been recognized in all ages. Almost every great hero—Hercules, Moses, Mohammed, Napoleon, Lenin—has had a period of flight. Escape is an essential part of the myth of the hero; it reflects both his superiority and his alienation. So great has been mankind's reverence for the fugitive that it has immunized him at times from the consequences of even the most terrible crimes. Thus the two greatest criminals of antiquity were placed under divine protection in their flight; Cain, who was marked against harm; Oedipus, who found refuge in the grove of the Eumenides. All of this cannot be explained, Mr. Calas, by the sociology of crime.

HAROLD ROSENBERG
Washington, D. C.

THE ANARCHIST VIEW?

"Is *View* an Anarchist publication? The 'London Letter' by George Woodcock is the first indication that your magazine has any pronounced political sympathies. I am interested to know if readers may expect more communications of this type."

GERALD BROOKS
New York City

The answer to Mr. Brooks' question is "No." However, *View* is open-minded to the extent that its pages are available to any writer, regardless of his political beliefs, who has something interesting and truthful to say. Mr. Woodcock sent us an excellent communiqué on labor conditions in England. Because he sent us an equally, if not more, interesting letter on the London literary scene (and behind it), we are again publishing the work of a poet who has time to think about political and economic as well as literary realities.

THE EDITORS

MYTH AND MYTHMAKING

"Will you please renew my subscription to *View* . . . ? I do not want to be or seem ungraciously critical, but the editorial statement of the 'point of View' in the April issue seemed to me neither clear nor adequate. We have a surfeit of arguments about myth and mythmaking, but most of them are naive debates, begun without philosophic definition of myth, without attempted explanation of man's mythmaking faculty. . . . Closer to the real practice of your editors, writers, and artists is the excellent first speech of the Poet in 'Within Good and Evil'. Mr. Calas isolates their urgent problem, identifies the enemies of art, and, above all, defines the salients: anxiety, withdrawal, desolation. . . . All together, *View* seems to have Whitehead's characteristics of life: absolute self-enjoyment, creative activity, and aim."

MARY BARRETT
Book Editor *The Library Journal*

SURREALISM AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

"In regard to the editorial in the current (April) number of *View*, you state that other sides of the artistic question besides the unconscious must be considered. Does this mean that you have leanings away from Surrealism? . . . Primitive art, through the untamed emotions, and Surrealism, through the world of dreams and desires, will be, after all is said and done, the only great artistic and literary movements of the twentieth century. Do they not renew this emotional contact that you speak of?"

PHILIP LAMANTIA
San Francisco, Calif.

*Surrealism does not claim that the only problem to be considered is that of the unconscious. Breton's second surrealist manifesto, the review *Le surrealisme au service de la revolution*, *Calas' Foyers d'Incendie*, the Breton-Rivera Manifesto (also called the FIARI Manifesto), Trotsky's open letter to Breton (published in Partisan Review, Winter 1939), all indicate that surrealism is opposed to the view that problems of the unconscious are the only ones that should or can interest poets and artists of our time. On the other hand, nothing that was written in our editorial of the last issue would indicate that we are reacting against surrealism's attitude toward the problems of the unconscious. In this editorial, we said, "Artists should have the courage to follow their ideas and emotions to the utmost limit" and "to ascapism through myths, the creator opposes imagination and insight." As the utmost limit of emotions is to be found in the unconscious and as the source of imagination is in the unconscious, the obvious conclusion is that we consider the unconscious a vital factor in producing the emotional contact obtained through art.*

Furthermore, we believe that in a vanguard magazine appearing in 1943 the importance of the unconscious in creative work is something that should be taken for granted. Our readers know that it is as impossible to write poetry by following rules of versification as it is to make new chemical discoveries with the help of the outdated theory of phlogistics. At the same time, this is no reason why we should limit all further investigations to the application of the discoveries of a Lavoisier or a Freud. As heredity cannot be explained by plain chemical reactions, so poetry cannot be limited to the influence of the unconscious on a written page or a canvas. *View* will experiment and investigate all fields that affect and interest the poet.

THE EDITORS

A CORRECTION

The Editors regret that the name of Porter Forrester, whose poem, "Women and Love," appeared in the April issue, was erroneously given as Preston Forrester, and offer him their apology.

A NEW MAGAZINE

Yvan Goll announces the June appearance of a new magazine, *Hemispheres*, to be published in English and French. Among its contributors will be Alain Bosquet, Roger Cailllois, William Carlos Williams, Charles Henri Ford, and Parker Tyler. The address is 136 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N. Y. The price is 40c. It may be obtained at Gotham Book Mart.

Shortly

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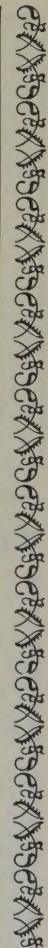
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Shepherdess of the Sphinxes

(Continued from Page 49)

sculptural poses. They were neither phantoms nor dream personages nor the sacred monsters of Max Ernst and Dali. Nor were they the actors in Chirico's great tragedies.

The women Leonor paints are human and beyond time, supernatural without being dreamlike. They live and have their being in the mythological world of Leonor's *Alta fantasia*.

The climate of her pictures is reminiscent of the magical atmosphere of Shakespeare's comedies or *La Morte d'Arthur*—appropriate enough for her heroines: new Andromedas, Arianes, Rosalinds, Isoldes, Melisandes, Griseldas, Roxanas, Armidas, Angelicas, Judiths and Cleopatras.

Theseus, Pelléas, Lancelot and Medor are merely apparitions in these legendary visions and seldom play a dominant role. In fact, the flexible body of a young girl often takes the place of the unwanted hero, sometimes wearing the armor of Perseus or resting on the couch of Holophernes.

However, it must be clearly understood that Leonor does not interpret parables in the manner of Mantegna or Burne-Jones. She really creates a new myth: these are other Arianes, Andromedas, Cleopatras—although they do not have these names. In fact, they have no names. Cosimo Tura, Piero di Cosimo and later, Boecklin and Odilon Redon are also exponents of this myth-making quality in art.

Only expression, attitude and gesture interpret Leonor's thought. The settings in her paintings are reduced to a few suggestions (reminiscent of Shakespeare and Watteau's décors) such as a portico with jagged arches; a room in ruins, a richly draped alcove. Clothes are evoked rather than delineated—a copper diadem worn by the Nubian slave in "Le Bain" or the romantic cape of the "Jeune homme à la chaise" or the piece of armor which holds the torso of a young woman (Judith?) or the lion skin which covers a girl stretched out, sphinx-like, at the edge of the pool.

In the settings, certain furnishings or accessories take on dramatic value: a single iron chair with contours like a Baroque façade; a huge sunflower which coifs a mad Ophelia; the butterfly-shaped cloak which covers the "soul" of a Psyche whose body is clothed with interminable locks of blond hair; or the ten duckling heads rising from a young woman's breast.

Leonor Fini knows the rules and possibilities of this chess game of accessories as well as Chirico or Dali. For example, in her important composition, "Le Bain," she uses an empty architectural structure. In the second variation of this work, she replaces the nine personages, representing organic life, by strange forms (sea urchin shells, feathers, fish bones) lying on the wet bottom of the pool.

Sometimes Leonor indulges in sheer decoration, composing the most bizarre "grotesques" out of breastplates ornamented with ash boughs and roots, crested with the skeletons of birds of prey. These are the pastimes of her untiring creativeness which delights in making harmonious patterns out of the most disparate elements.

But the most essential part of her work is the human face. Leonor Fini often limits her portraits to the face only. In her scrupulous observation of reality she seems to find a refuge from the overflow of her own imagination.

The face in her pictures is never disguised, never masked or transfigured in any way. As Leonor says, those who admire a life-like resemblance can enjoy her work and those who thrill to fine workmanship can examine the eyebrows and lips under a magnifying glass.

But the moment she leaves the circumscribed space of the forehead, the wind whips the hair under her brush. Fantasy rules again. And the painter must inexorably follow in the wake of the sirens.

Thus a work of rare integrity is built up. Each new page seems to add episodes to a sort of heroic chronicle; the "Branche de Renard" and the "très beaux ambages du Roi Arthur" used to increase and multiply in the same way.

In this moving and high-spirited work, what part belongs essentially to womanhood? It is the subtle, nuanced, all-enveloping grace . . . the gift of the curved line which the mere talent for drawing does not explain. No man could paint the soft contours of breasts, the shadowy concave surfaces of hips with the ease and abandon of Leonor. Her perception of the world takes its source in the key of G on a guitar . . .

In other hands, such premises would have resulted in insipid pastorales.

But Leonor remains the imperious shepherdess of a herd of sphinxes.

Magic

(Continued from Page 46)

religious prayer, the revolutionists are too apt to confuse it with publicity. The poet of today has no other choice than to be a revolutionist or not to be a poet, for he must constantly hurl himself into the unknown; the step he took yesterday in no way dispenses with the one he will take tomorrow, since every day everything has to be begun all over again. Even what he acquired in sleep turns to ashes on awakening. There is no secure movement—there, where he has nothing to receive, neither praise nor laurels, but where he has to give all his strength to the task of beating down the barricades of habit and routine—barricades which keep on rising.

Today he must be the "accursed" poet. This malediction cast at him by society points out his revolutionary position; but he will come out of his enforced reserve and be placed at the head of society when it has been split from top to bottom, and when it will have recognized the common human origin of both poetry and science. Then the poet, with the active and passive collaboration of the people, will create marvellously exalting myths that will send the entire world out to the assault of the Unknown.

Mystery Is Redeemed by Light

(Continued from Page 58)

the daydream; so much intelligence is on hand only to recreate the mystery of life.

This truth will wound only those who make of man an image that further distorts scholastic prejudices, yet an ingenuous humanism will not be inspired to take offense. Now one can appreciate that Quinten Matsys, who moved more easily in the real world than among crucifixions and other mythological anecdotes, should have shared the friendship of Erasmus, who more than any other freed renascent man from false categories and restored to him his indissoluble complexity. For Matsys knew that a perfect use of what is called "intelligence" implies the putting to work of the imaginative powers, thus fusing the gratifying practise of the former with the free play of the latter. Whereas half-light dulls the mind to the point where it perceives only what has been formulated as an equation, great lucidity—like those X-rays that lay bare the interior of bodies opaque to our feeble eyes—recreates mystery through its own strength.

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